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ROBERT E. SPEER

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R. E. Speer  
Correspondence, etc. Tributes from Iran.



## A Tribute of Appreciation

Now that Dr. Spier is reaching the time of his retirement as Senior Secretary of our Board of Foreign Missions, we desire as members of the Graue Mission to express our keen regret at the loss his relinquishing of this office will mean to the Mission, and our deep appreciation of all that he has meant to us personally and to the Mission as a whole during his more than forty years of service in this capacity. Our Mission considers itself peculiarly fortunate to have been one of the few Missions in Dr. Spier's especial charge during this long term of service, comprising nearly half of the Mission's history. Only one missionary now in our field came to Graue before Dr. Spier took over the correspondence with this area: hence to all of us he has always been "our Secretary".

Many of us can remember the early help and inspiration that came to us from his writings and addresses and from personal interviews in the days when we were considering the call to the mission field. And who of us has not been stimulated in later years by his books, by his correspondence, or by attendance at meetings or conferences where he was one of the speakers? Throughout the days of our service abroad we have felt it a distinction to be his co-workers in our common cause and to be



counted in the wide circle of his friends: and whenever special honors have come to him from the church he has so faithfully served, we have felt that we too have been honored.

His thorough knowledge of missionary history, his masterly apologetic on behalf of foreign missions, and the clarity and cogency of his reasoning have strengthened our sense of confidence in our work, especially in times of crisis and criticism. His clear-sighted judgment and his penetrating insight into mission problems have often exposed the bias of our own thinking and have helped us to find the answer to many a perplexing question in our missionary work. His manifold achievements, his tireless zeal in numberless activities, the heavy burden of responsibility he has constantly borne, and with all this the scope and quantity of both his reading and writing, have ever been to us an exemplification of the abundant life. His unwavering faith, his unflinching optimism, his understanding sympathy, and his deep spirituality have always given us confidence in the adequacy of his leadership, and have beckoned us to higher planes of Christian living and service.

As Dr. Speer now gives up his work at "156" after so many years of magnificent accomplishment, the heartiest good wishes of the Iraw Mission go with him in whatever varied



activities may fill the years ahead. And our earnest prayer is that each day may be bright with the satisfaction of creative achievement and the benediction of God's perfect peace. June 2, 1937



Tabriz, Iran  
June 2, 1937.

Dr. Robert E. Speer D. D.  
New York City, U. S. A.

My dear Dr. Speer:

I greatly appreciate the opportunity of writing to you on behalf of the Evangelical Church in Iran. The past half century during which you have served as Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions has been a formative period in our Church. We are fully aware of your noble service on behalf of the Church and your attitude reflected in the Mission has made possible the formation of our present organization.

When your service began with the Board, the Church in Iran was not very large or of great importance. It is during your direction of the Mission policy that the organization has spread over all the field of your Mission and has grown to include people of many nationalities. Assyrians, Armenians, those members of the chosen



people Israel who have found Christ, former Zoroastrians, and converts from Islam. We know that you rejoice to see the growth of the church and the assumption of more responsibility in self-support and propagation of the Gospel, which are the signs that the church is a living organism. Though we have a long way to go before we may hope to get along without the support of your mission, yet the organization of three presbyteries and a Synod in this country is a step in the right direction, we feel, and gradually these bodies will be able to assume a greater place of leadership in this land. The younger church in Iran feels that it is the child of the mission and the grandchild of your church in America. As parents rejoice to see their children grow and gain in strength we know that your heart is with us as we struggle forward to every advance in Christ's Kingdom.

Our people remember your trip with Mrs. Speer soon after you became Secretary of the Board, how you saw the work of the



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great Urumia Station at that time and your difficult journeys and severe illness in Hamadan.

We remember your visit in 1922 and the hardships you encountered on those winter journeys, but we feel that all your sufferings were a sacrifice that meant a very great deal in inspiration to the Church in Iran.

We thank God for your former visits which are remembered as milestones in the work and in the life of the Christian Community, and we trust that when relieved of responsibilities in New York we may expect another visit from you and Mrs. Speer.

The Church in Iran has always received great help from your published addresses, and your articles in the various missionary periodicals, and your books. As a member of the Church I may witness to what your inspiration has meant to me personally. Aside from the great spiritual help that I have derived from your writings through the years, I recall most vividly the times when I have felt the inspiration of your personal presence. As long as I live I shall never forget the inspiration I received from your address



to the conference of out going mission-aries in 1931. on the subject of Our Mission-ary duty to the World. Again I recall when you addressed us as students at Princeton Theological Seminary with the powerful summons to dedication to the world wide cause of Christ. Especially I remember one of the most powerful sermons I have ever heard, your address at the Winona Lake conference on the theme, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Also at the Faxeville Conference I received permanent benefit from your strong stand upon Evangelism as our primary duty. All members of our Church in Iran who have met you and those of us who have heard you in America feel that we have been privileged to speak with one who had been with Christ.

Though your active service with the Board soon comes to a close we know that the Church of Iran will be constantly in your thoughts and prayers. We realize our responsibility because our Church has more members who are converts from Islam, than the Christian



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body in any of the other major Muhammedan lands. We would dedicate ourselves to even greater zeal for the salvation of our brethren who are still under the yoke of Islam, and know that we may count upon your support in all our efforts in this regard. Our hope and prayers are that this church in Iran may not only be a great and powerful witness for Christ in this land, but that this church may be fired with the spirit which caused the ancient church in Iran to send missionaries to the farthest lands of the great continent of Asia.

The church in Iran goes forward with full confidence that God will raise up leaders for this mighty worldwide work who will have the qualifications of zeal, love, and faith in the foundations of belief, that have been so clearly exemplified in your long service as a great director of the missionary enterprise. It is God's work, He will provide. We know that as you step out of one line of service into work of a



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different character the worldwide inspira-  
tion of your personality will go on. The  
church in Iran wishes you God's richest  
blessings as you reach the age of three-  
score and ten.

Love in Christ from your  
Iranian friends,

Sincerely yours,  
Stephan O. Khoobyar

Tahuz, Iran.



Our dear friend, - Cousin Rob as we love to call you!

In not only rejoice in being counted -  
-ed your friends but as distant cousins.

My acquaintance with you dates from  
Princeton days, for while I did not have the  
privilege of meeting you personally when  
in the Seminary '84 & '85 I heard a good  
deal of you in your connection with that  
noted group, composed of yourself, the Formans  
& Robt Wilder, who laid the foundation for the  
Student Volunteer movement, & little dreamed  
then that you would be our beloved Secretary  
for so many years in Persia.

I was glad to meet you & the Blackburns at  
Julfa in 1896, as well as to conduct you to some  
of our Christian villages later to act as trans-  
lator of your messages. That was a full day  
when we spent a Sat. night in Ahawa, & then  
Sunday covered Saathie, Dizetaka Shimohagan &  
ended with Geogtapa where we had our largest church  
& congregation. You kindly spoke in the Old Restorian  
Church where the good pastor Kasha Gouristill works.

Then later came the journey to Haacada & Zheraw  
I was proud to be chosen your conductor, It was a respo-  
sibility to have two ladies Mrs Speer & Miss Lincoln, who were



unaccustomed to roughing it - I feared Cousin Euma might not stand it - But she took it bravely & uncomplainingly tho sometimes twelve hours in the saddle. I was fortunate at Bijar to be able to wire Mr Hawkes to bring his buggy out to meet us, coming down the mountain the day before reaching Hamadan we saw buggy tracks & then they disappeared. It seemed he had come, & passed one side of the hill while we went the other, thus missing each other. He arrived when we were at supper.

How thrilled you were with those early morning rides in Oct. when one could look off so far in every direction in that clear atmosphere of Persia! over mountain ranges & plains - And how you laughed at the nasty dose I gave Benjamin who was playing sick - That cured him!

The Post Chappari journey on to Teheran from Hamadan was considered too hard for the ladies & they were left there to wait for us.

What a busy week that was in Teheran with the conferences & meetings. No wonder you were tired out when we started back, & I shall always remember a beautiful talk you gave on Phil 4:8 - "Think on these things." Fortunately a carriage was secured for the first day, & at seven in the evening we started by chappari to make one stage. I did not know you were suffering agony until you said you must stop. Lying on the ground



I covered you with my coat and then prayed. How touchy was that vast plain with no sign of life. I had sent the post boy off to secure a place for us, but was greatly relieved when you said you could go on. Reaching Hamadan we learned you were down with typhoid!

When you made your second visit to Persia I was busy with evangelistic services in the villages about Hamadan where we had been transferred so saw little of you.

156 Fifth Avenue will never be the same to us with you gone. How we shall miss you! Your letters have always meant so much to me & contained a helpful message. God has greatly used & blessed you not only in your many trips to all parts of the world where your messages will not be forgotten, but by your many inspirational books by which you will be remembered.

I have always envied such men as yourself & Dr. Gwerner, & felt very humble in your presence. You have been my ideal these many years. I do hope we may meet even if you are not at 156 & we shall always want to keep in touch with you.

Please accept with the deepest affection this feeble tribute which comes far from expressing our feelings.

Eda Speer Coan  
 Frederick G. Coan



2135 Oakdale St.

Pasadena, California.

My dear Mr. Speer:

After receiving your honorary degree at Edinburgh, one of the members of our station was home on furlough and addressed you as Dr. Speer, and with characteristic humility and friendliness you replied, "to my friends always Mr. Speer." And so through all the years Dr. Vanneeman and I have been so happy and honored to be counted among those favored ones, and, <sup>now</sup> address you as my dear friend, Mr. Speer.

We have shared many hours of sorrow, anxiety, encouragement, happiness and triumph during those years, and while you were in America and we in far-off Persia, we always felt a strong confidence and encouragement in you as our leader.

I will remember what an uplift we



received from your first visit to Lebriz.

There were so many difficult problems from without confronting the Mission at that time, then you came with your clear vision and helpful suggestions and made many a path plain to us.

and how much Dr. Vanueman enjoyed and was helped spiritually by your last visit!

There is so much I could write about the help and blessing you were to us during those many years of devoted service, you gave so gladly and lovingly to us all; I find it difficult to express the full measure of our appreciation, but I know your understanding heart will interpret my meaning.

and dear Mr. Spear when I say we love you and Mrs. Spear and wish you both many happy years of service in our Father's work, I feel Dr. Vanueman is joining me in that wish and would say with me, God bless you both.

Affectionately your friend,  
Marguerite A. Vanueman.



همدان



Hamadan



Hamadan Station sends to Dr. and Mrs. Speer  
their loving greetings and best wishes

May 1937



Upper row; left to right:-  
Dr. Funk, Mrs. Elder, Louise Elder, Mr. Wright, Mrs. Allen,  
Miss Gardner, Craig Fisher, Mr. Fisher

Middle row:-  
Alice Elder, Mrs. Funk, Mrs. Lichtwardt, Mrs. Watson,  
Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Müller, Dr. Lichtwardt

Lower Row:-  
Mr. Elder, David Elder, William Elder, Margaret Fisher,  
Joseph Elder, Mr. Watson, Mr. Müller



Dear Mr. Spier, -

One feels about your retirement from the Board much as Blish must have felt when Blish ascended in the whirlwind on a chariot of fire: "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" The Presbyterian Board without you is a conception as difficult to entertain as it is unwelcome.

You are inseparably connected with my interest in foreign missions from the very beginning. It is a movement that meant nothing to me as a boy, just an inconceivable and herculean nation of queer unknown people, and almost my first contact with it was through our college delegate to the Kansas City S. M. Convention. I can still remember the impressive report he gave of the powerful addresses of Watt & Spier. And during the succeeding years as I have read your articles and books, listened to your dynamic addresses and have come to appreciate your sweeping grasp on mission problems, past, present, and future, you



have become more and more the embodiment of all that is finest and best in the missionary enterprise.

To me personally you have constituted one of the most convincing apologetics for our faith. There are so many modern writers who speak of religion in a supercilious way, treating it as a pardonable weakness in women and children but scarcely worth a second thought for clever men such as they; - that at times one becomes secretly uneasy, wondering whether it may not be so. But when he recalls such men as you and Mr. Watt, the idea falls to the ground of its own ridiculous weight. No one can reflect on the truly superhuman output of your labors, spiritual, mental, and executive, and feel that Christianity is unable to appeal to the most brilliant intellect.

To every one of us on Presbyterian fields around the world, your separation from the work of the Board brings a sense



of personal loss, and we can only wish  
you many years of even more usefulness  
as, relieved of the desired responsibilities  
of a Board Secretary you open a new  
chapter of your life service.

Cordially yours,

Wm. Elder



Hamadan, Iran.

May 21, 1937.

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Speer,

To-day, as John and I walked through 'Auntie Sue' Funk's garden, the true blue, royal purple, and pure white flage, the delicate columbine, gorgeous peonies, gay variety of tulips, sturdy little English daisies, and tall wild rose, made me think of some of the many, many times when you dear people have been real guardian angels to me.

True blue flage; recall a Northfield conference, - my first, attended between High School and College days. From it I carried away a Student Volunteer declaration card. The white flage remind me of a Sunday morning at Willerley, when I signed, - after having it for two years, - that S.V. card. Then, with a clear conscience, I listened to one of Dr. Speer's wonderful sermons, - in the Willerley Chapel.

Peonies: the color of robes worn on a certain memorable evening in Chicago, where the paths of two S.V.M. traveling secretaries crossed briefly. My future M.D. path to India under the Methodist Board, was redirected to Persia, as in Mrs., under the Presbyterian Board. Reports of your courtship helped me to decide it was not an unpardonable sin to stop forcing myself into medical service alone, - so I gave up the struggle, and became engaged.

The columbine always looks rather embarrassed to me, - the way I felt when I met Mrs. Silverthorn the next day, - and when I wrote a letter home, breaking the news to my East Orange family that I intended to become the wife of a man they had never heard of, and whom they would meet after several months, - when our schedules brought us east. I'm glad you had a "heart affair".

Wild roses bring to mind Silver Bay conferences, - with Mrs. Speer such an inspiring leader of young people, - and so natural about it all. Just as though others might also hope to be wife, mother, and leader, too!

The gay variety of tulips of course belong to young folks. What a joy to meet your Margaret, at Wallace Lodge. I had often longed to meet a girl who was everything that a young lady should be. At last I found one. Our six varieties of Kiddies are each so dear. May each one develop into a perfect flower of its kind!

What else could sturdy little daisies be but the first year or two on the field? There is not much glamour about daisies, - nor about language



study, cooking with queer materials and queer utensils, housekeeping with no real broom, and with an assortment of small animal life not hitherto met with, - nor yet with trying out 35 cooks in a few months, with friend husband commenting on the fact that if we could just convert our cooks, we would have a good start for a church. There were lonely times, too, such as when John was off to Syria for the N.E.C.C. for weeks, then off to Ispahan for months. How often have I been cheered with the thought that in one way I was like Mrs. Spear, - for I too prefer being my husband's wife a few days a year, than anyone else's for the entire 365 days.

There can be found no flower or words to express the divine strength and love which you have shown, over and over again, in times which were for some of us real children, days of stress. God helping us, we too shall grow in stature.

The setting of green grass and trees, I like to think of as your books, - so permanent, so fresh, so far reaching. 'The Girl's Influence' is influencing many of my young girl friends here, this year. Short stories, and long. How we do appreciate them, for ourselves, - and to loan to others.

Iris of royal purple, - the color for the King. Not yet is there the reality of a tremendous garden full, - but we see flashes of His standard, here, and again, there. From where we are, in the rain and file, we take fresh inspiration and courage as we see you beloved leaders ahead. I like to think of you, too, as the spirit of service, in the Miss Freeman Palmer memorial. After many years out of college I still feel like that young girl, wanting to light for others the torch of the abundant life, yet ever needing a gentle 'push'. How often, as I feel an urge to call on Zareen to-day, or to talk over a certain matter with Sohira, I see the folds back home whose prayers are showing me the way. We do feel you guiding and supporting us with your prayers. What a privilege, to think of you two dear Great-hearts, as "our ever beloved friend Mrs. Spear!"

Your grateful friend,

Ruth Poole Elder.



Hamadan, Iran

May 20, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer:—

Greetings from Iran! Ours is the rare privilege of sharing in this tribute to you and your work for "The Kingdom of God", especially in Iran.

We know that as a result of your work for the church in Iran there are untold hundreds who know what Christ can do for them and for their country. They are working with us that their fellow-countrymen might come to accept Him as their Saviour too and I am sure that at this time they would wish to be remembered to you.



As we join in this tribute to you, we want to tell you how much we do especially appreciate your kindly interest in a personal way. Along with the larger issues with which you have had to deal you have kept at all times that human touch which makes us claim you as friend as well as "Board Secretary." From the time in 1920, when, with a group of Persia missionaries I played baseball on your lawn, till now; during our trying delay in India; following the death of our Billy Boy in 1935; and last year, during the weeks of indecision as to our future, we found in you a true friend, a tower of strength, bearing up under your own heartbreaks and showing us the way.



After this formal "farewell" - of course the work will go on - as you have planned that it should - and surely it will yet yield fruits beyond our fondest expectations. Such a life as you have given to Persia cannot return void.

So, Dr. Speer, we bid you farewell as Secretary for the Iran Mission. However, we shall all continue to cherish you as friend and counsellor whose interest in Iran will not cease, simply because the calendar says that you are seventy years old.

Some years ago when the Allen watchdog was poisoned Dorothy prayed, "Dear God, now that Towner is gone, you must take care of us."



We have a keen appreciation of her feelings now as we contemplate the future without your counsel to guide us!

With best wishes for the years to come and kind remembrances of the years gone by we are,

Very Cordially yours,  
Commodore B. Fisher  
Frank S. Fisher



Hamadan,  
Iran.

Dear Dr. Speer:-

It is with feelings of true regret that we attempt to convey a message to one who through so many years has been to us as a friend, guide, co-worker, and inspirer in the task of carrying our wonderful Gospel to this part of the Lord's vineyard.

For the one who has known you through the whole period of your connection with the Board of Foreign Missions, and the one who for the thirty-five years of his connection with our Board has known you only a little less intimately, the ties that have united us are not easily severed.

It will take some years for us to realize that the familiar face and the familiar name are no longer associated with One Fifty-six. As it will also seem very strange no longer to see the well-remembered signature at the end of the Board letters.

We of Hamadan Station have always



felt that there was a rather special attachment binding you to us because of the long illness through which you passed here, - we hope not so much because of the remembrance of suffering and trial of patience, but rather because of the associations and fellowships developing during your your sojourn.

Then again both of us recall with so much pleasure the days you spent in our home at the time of your second visit to Iran. And the hours of spiritual fellowship spent in the days of Conference are remembered specially because of the inspiration of your presence, experience and admonition.

We wish also to recall and to thank you for the personal letters which, although not frequent in these later years, always were read with so much enjoyment, both because of the lighter and intimate touches as well as the serious and spiritual and stimulating note never missing in them.

We do not anticipate that this official retirement is going to end your



connection with the work, - in fact we feel quite certain that your interest will not wane in the least and that you will continue to render incalculable aid to the fullest extent of your strength and powers. We recall your oft-quoted phrase: "It is better to burn out than to rust out," and know that you are not likely to be the one to rust out. And so we shall continue to look for your helpful inspiration in one form or another during the years allotted to you and us.

We are anticipating leaving on furlough at the end of the summer but fear your retirement will antedate our arrival, and so shall realize some disappointment in not seeing you in your usual place at One Fifty-six. But we are also hopeful that in some way we shall be privileged to meet you and again profit by your advice and encouragement.

In what we have written, we do not forget the pleasure we have had in knowing and associating with Mrs. Speer. And having known her, we realize that she



too has had a part in the labors of these  
many years.

With affectionate regards to you  
both,

Your sincere friends,

See Leinbock Funk  
Jr Arthur Funk



Dear Dr. Speer.

It is with feelings of deepest gratitude that I join with my fellow-missionaries in sending you a little note of appreciation of your unceasing friendship and good-will during the twenty-five years I have known you.

You have been the 'Man of God' in my life all these years, I still remember with what confidence and trust you sent me to the Mission field.

I might also speak for members of our group in those early days, who have passed on to their reward, and who fostered in me this feeling of your never-failing thought and care for each one of us, so much so, that often when I was in the depths of despair about my work, a

gentle voice would whisper, "Just write and tell Dr. Speer, dear, he will understand."

Yes, I have written you many long letters, only to be consigned to the waste-paper basket, when the Lord's answer came at the dawning of a new day.

I am glad you never received them, nevertheless it did me good to write them, and so, I have always regarded you as a real friend, rather than a Board Secretary.

There was always so much of yourself in your letters, that one could not fail to discern the Spiritual Presence in which you lived.

May it be ours to exemplify in our lives "the Gospel of truth, and love, and purity, and unity, and peace, and love, and Salvation," as you have exemplified in yours.



We shall miss those personal messages, but we can never lose sight of the friend who has inspired us to noble service despite our many imperfections.

Wishing you many happy years abounding in blessings, more and more until the perfect day.

Yours very sincerely,  
Mary Gardner.

Hamadan Iran

May 14, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer:-

One cannot express in words the deepest feelings of the heart, but yet, as we think of your retirement, it brings to us mixed feelings of sadness, of rejoicing and of congratulation.

The sadness is genuine for we recall your helpful guidance, earnest advice and constant assistance thru all our years in Iran; and know that you will now, of necessity, lose actual touch with the immediate problems of the field and of the individual missionary, altho we feel that Iran will always have a very precious place in your memory.

We rejoice with you in this chance for what we pray will be many years of leisure to do those many things which routine, responsibility and heavy executive duties have prevented you from doing: the chance to relax and recuperate



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the opportunities for constructive loafing, and uninterrupted reading and browsing, for hours of fishing or tramping or just resting; may all the days be indeed such in their fullness.

Congratulations are so unnecessary because they are so evident; the multitudinous worthwhile accomplishments, the hundreds inspired to less selfish living, the thousands drawn near to the Christ, all all more real congratulations than any which could be penned by human hand.

We have such happy memories of our personal contacts with you in America and in Iran, and of your loving thoughts as expressed in your many letters. We pray for your continued health and strength: may God continue to richly bless both you and Mrs. Speer thru-out the years.

Very sincerely  
Hilda and Hartman Lichtwardt

Dear Dr. Speer,-

A lighthouse at sea amidst destructive forces and confusion of voices is a grand parable of stability, strength, peace, guidance. What traveller of the sea has not become thoughtful as his ship has passed such a beacon? Built firmly on rock foundation far below the waters and below the soil and silt; rising high above the friendly tides, and high above the angry froth of charging billows; a clear light over the dark waters to a far distant horizon; and a warm heart inside that ever keeps the watchers aglow, often anxious, often lonely.

God be thanked, the Church has many lighthouses; but you have been to me and to many others, and especially to us in Iran, the light that has beckoned and warned and guided more steadily and more convincingly than any of the other human guides in the Church; again and again you have warmed our hearts to our opportunities and inspired us



with new courage when the barometer was falling. To us you have represented the Church at Home, and to the Church at Home you have been the advocate for the Church Abroad. Christ and His Cause have been your life and your power; your loyalty to Church, to Missions, and to your fellowmissionaries have endeared you to us; your readiness to trust, to venture, to advance have made you a leader whom we are loath to surrender.

The absence of "Urnumia" from the catalogue of stations that greet you from Iran in this memento will not go unnoticed by you, I know. You made it very evident to us when you sent us on our way in 1910 that you had a warm spot in your heart for Urnumia, and that interest was always in evidence so long as "Urnumia Station" lasted. I have a large portrait of Dr. Perkins in my study, and his kindly face has called forth comment from many callers. I thought I had an extra copy of this in reduced form to attach to this page, but I find I have not. However, as a little reminder of Urnumia days and Urnumia fellowship, may I include a picture of your

old friend, and mine, Kasha Isabella Shimmou, who still continues as a Lighthouse pastor in "Urumia" three years after the station was closed. Ruth took the picture on a visit we made to "Rezaieh" last September (1936). On Kasha's right is an elder of the Jeogtapa Church, and on his left the last principal of that Boys School which Dr. Perkins founded in 1836.



Although we shall no longer be permitted to bring our mission problems to you in an official way addressed to "15-6", I trust the door will not be closed to us when we need to draw on your experience and great heartedness in an unofficial way.

Very affectionately yours,

Hugo.



Dear Dr and Mrs Speer.

A bit less than forty years ago I had my first introduction to Mr Speer, one day on the train going into Philadelphia, Mother handed me a small leaflet saying "Look at these faces, daughter. There are two of God's noblemen". The men were Mr Robert E. Speer and Mr John K. Mott, I looked and wondered to myself. How does she know they are great men?

It was some years before I heard you, but I have a very distinct picture of the first time I ever saw you and Mrs Speer together. Silver Bay 1905 (?) she had been presiding at the Student Conference. The evening boat came in and all flocked to the landing, especially as we knew she had gone to meet Mr Speer, the week end speaker.

As you walked up from the boat I very carefully snapped a picture of your backs, utterly lacking courage to ask permission. The picture was dim and long ago went with other cherished things big and little in the Arminia box. But the impress of it has always remained, you and the tall slender figure at your side. It has made Mrs Speer definitely a part of you, in my mind.

During those years Dr Juerner spoke at a S. N. gathering on the "Loneliness of Leadership". If that, you have had experience, but surely too, an increasing knowledge of rich love and deep sympathy, poured out to you during these years, especially in times of grief and stress. That love was felt for you both the next year, when during the S. B. Conference, word came of your little Gertrude's (?) serious illness and then of her home going. It may be that young people don't have the deep appreciation of such grief that older ones have, but I know the loving remembrance in prayer was with deep longing then, as in your more recent loss. And the love of our Father the same.

The sharing of your home, as at the times of June Conferences for New Mission.



aries, you have received us in large groups for an afternoon and evening, has given many scores a most delightful memory of you. In 1910 when we drove out to see the Palisades Elliott - and Margaret went along. A snap-shot of them I recall. Elliott in a blue serge coat and large white collar, Margaret with her curls. In 1919 I think we didn't see any of the children, but Constance. Billy had the "mumps."

Then there is the memory of the happy anticipation of your coming to be a guest in our home in Tabriz during your visit in 1922. Memories of trying to get a bed big enough for you. Our days of conference together, when you so characteristically drew from us, ideas on our problems. How many times since we have spoken of that, How even the question "Are you sure you are giving enough importance to the work for the Assyrians?" continued to be asked as we returned to Urumia the next Fall and tried to reconstruct there. Strange, the number of sixteen we had rather settled on as desirable for our future work there, had just about been allocated there, when the closing came.

The last time I saw you two together was at the Parkside Apartment. We were having lunch there. Some one passed. We looked up and there were you and Mrs Speer. It was early October '34. How we were all constantly remembering you both in prayer. "God bless and keep D2 and Mrs Speer" and we do continually. And thank Him too, for you and all you are and have done.

Very sincerely yours  
Laura McL. Muller,  
(Mrs H. A.)

May 22. 1937.



Hamadan, Iran  
July 12, 1937

Dear Dr. Spear,

I do not have the privilege of saying I have known you personally nor have I the privilege of saying I've been in Iran when you travelled through.

However, I can say I have had the privilege of knowing you through your books, your mission letter and the three short visits in your office.

Through these means I've personally been better able to reinterpret to Christ for myself and to others.

Now that you are released from office routine I hope that you will find time to do all those things in life you have always wanted to do.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Lucile Sweeney

Hamadan Iran May 14, 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer,

I am glad of an opportunity of writing to you on this occasion. Many memories and incidents will come to your mind and be recalled by others too.

For my own part, I wish to express my appreciation of how much your presence in New York during the past fourteen years since I have been on the field has meant. I have enjoyed and been encouraged by reading the regular letters you have been the principal means of sending out to the Mission. I have realized through the tone of these that an effort has always been made to make us all a part of a Cause and not mere units in an organization, alone. I have been enthused by your presence when we left for the



field, with the inspirational talks and addresses.

In addition to this, your personal letters to me have been valued. I was greatly assured and comforted at the time of my father's passing, in the kind letter of sympathy and remembrance at that period. These have been my personal impressions of your kindness in the relations growing out of our position as workers in the Cause we represent.

Your publications, however, have been another source of contact from which I have received pleasure and profit. Two only will be mentioned here for lack of space and time. "John the greatest book in the world," has been my possession for years since my Seminary days. It has been a valued and constant companion. "The Deity of

Christ," and the biographies of some of the missionaries have been much appreciated by me. Many others could be mentioned, just as much more could be said. I have tried to select that which has meant most to me.

This must be brought to a close, as I wish you a long, long shadow as the Persians express it - ~~that~~ "may your shadow never grow less." May your joy in the Lord increase with the days.

Cordially and sincerely,  
John A. Watson.



Hamadan, Iran,  
May 14, 1937.

Dear Dr. Spear,

We are sorry that you are retiring but realize that you deserve to be relieved of the heavy responsibilities you have carried faithfully for so many years.

The first time that I heard you speak was during the Des Moines Student Volunteer Convention of 1920. As some one told of the early morning prayer meetings that Dr. Wilder, Dr. Mott, and you held, I realized the reason for your influence on that assembly. A great tree must send its roots down deep.

Then at the June conference before we sailed, we had a chance to get a little better acquainted. Two things stand out especially in my mind. One was the afternoon tea in your lovely garden where we met Mrs. Spear and your daughter, Margaret, ready to sail for China. Another outstanding thing was the

communion at the close of the conference. You gave the message at that time.

When I think of the number of books you have found time to write so well, I realize what a good steward you have been of the years the Lord has given you.

We have just returned from a trip to the Kamou field. The Young Women's Prayer Circle and the American Children's Sunday School gave money for an American girl to go along. This was much needed as the older children speak very little Russian and the smaller ones, none at all. We tried to give these neglected children some idea of God's love, his plan of salvation and our part in helping spread the good news. Since only a few could read a bit, we taught them some hymns so Sunday morning they had a part in the service. We plan to encourage and help them by letters off and on. In evening home we found



their hand work displayed on the walls. It takes so little to make these dear kiddies happy. Though we had a turn at riding donkeys, we covered most of the trip by auto. Travel is easier now than in the days when you visited Iran. You better visit the modern Iran!

May you have many years to enjoy a bit of leisure, do the things you have not had time for, and enjoy all the good things our Heavenly Father gives us, day by day.

Sincerely,

Lucy L. Watson

May 15/37  
Hamadan, Iran

Dear Dr. Speer,

Tho' my memory extends back to the beginning of this century, I can not recall the time when your name was not identified with Foreign Missions. Nor has length been the only notable feature of that association, for during these dynamic times, when trends tend to go to excesses, you have given a sense of stability, which has reassured both the Church at home and its workers on the field.

I am sure I have been one of your problems - one of the excesses of the time. I can therefore better appreciate your value. Einstein attributed his ability to see farther to the fact that he "had stood on giant shoulders". Your vision and service have been what they are because you have stood upon a giant faith. The effects of your faith have overlapped the boundaries of our own Church and extended to the larger Church of Christ.

Tho' you will not much longer



be sitting in your office, we hope that for many years your name will continue to be identified with missions and the church, "as they go marching on."

Sincerely

Edwin M. Wright.

کرماتشاه



Kermanshah





Dr. Harry P. Packard  
Jan W. Packard, R.N.  
Luzee + Margaret



Dr. Mary Allen Zoekler  
Rev. G. F. Zoekler



Rev. Cady H. Allen



Huldah B. Allen



Edith D. Laumme



Amelia Enderson



Dear Dr. Spear,

I have been trying to think when I first met you, and I recall that it was at a Y. M. C. A. conference at Northfield in the summer of 1905, just after I had completed my sophomore year at Hamilton College. I remember going to your room for an interview and talking over with you "what constitutes a missionary call." We college folks in those days looked up to you and Dr. Mott as our great student leaders. How gratifying it was thirty years later to receive a letter from our now Robert after the Indianapolis Student Volunteer Convention, in which he wrote as follows: "some of the speakers were remarkable. I think that perhaps Robert E. Spear's 'got' me the most - his was the only one in which I didn't take my eyes off the speaker once - and at that I happened to be sitting behind him on the platform." That to me was a magnificent tribute - that you had been able to maintain your wonderful influence over so many generations of college students.

After Northfield came the Nashville Student Volunteer Convention and after Nashville Rockwell, and the first thing I remember I was sitting in your office at "156" among a group of Iran missionaries with a sort of feeling of awe and wondering what life on the mission field would be like. Well, I have found out what the first 25 years are like! It has been a rich experience, and I count it

one of the great privileges of this quarter of a century to have had the close association with you that the passing of time has brought - especially these later years when the Mission Secretaryship has necessitated my corresponding with you once or twice a month. I feel now that you are not only a Board Secretary but a friend!

How much it has meant to all of us missionaries to have you at the helm through these many years you can never know. It has given us a sense of confidence and security to feel certain that we had you, with your masterly handling of missionary problems and your far out-reaching influence both in the church and outside, to represent our cause. You have inspired us with your own faith and optimism. As you leave the Board Secretaryship, we shall miss you immeasurably as our special champion and sage counselor.

How much of guidance, encouragement and inspiration I have received from your addresses and writings it would be impossible to say. We have no yardsticks for measuring such intangible influences. I have been looking forward especially to reading your last book, "The Meaning of Christ to Me," but it seems to have been caught in the snag that has held up so much of our second class mail in Iran this past year. We shall all of us hope that freedom from executive duties in the days



ahead will give you the time for the writing of many another book.

Mrs. Allen and I plan to reach New York on our furlough about the first of September. So I am rejoicing in the chance to see you once more in your familiar office. In fact, I shall undoubtedly see you before you see this letter.

My very best wishes follow you and Mrs. Spear in whatever new endeavors you may be undertaking, and my prayers go with you in the future as they have after you in the past, that God will continue richly to bless you and use you in your further work for His Kingdom.

with sincere affection,

C. H. Allen.

May 20, 1937.

Kermanshah, Iran

May 24, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer,

Often times as a child at home I have heard my father tell of the very young Board Secretary who visited the Japan Mission and, because of his loving interest, sympathetic attitude and earnest desire to understand problems, made a closer, more real bond between the Mission and the Board than there had ever been before. During my own missionary experience, many, many times I have been reminded of my father's words by the loving sympathy, understanding, and steadfast faith that we have constantly felt in the letters and in the presence of that same 'very young Board Secretary'.

Most sincerely yours,  
Huldah Bryan Allen





I shall always remember this last year of your service as secretary in the Band of Foreign Missions in that it also marked our returning the 3<sup>rd</sup> time to our Lord's work in Iran. The first two terms were happy ones served with you as our secretary, this one starting out in the same way. Of course it is the Lord Jesus Christ who really has led us & continues to lead and we pray that He may lead you into even greater, in His sight, fields of endeavor.

God bless you, R. J. Dockett

Dear Dr. Speer:

First of all, may I congratulate you on your many years of service on the Board of Foreign Missions; and secondly, upon your service to humanity in general and in particular through preaching, teaching, books, personal contacts and the quiet, sympathetic and radiant influence which has permeated, shall I say, to all parts of the world, and to even me!

It was my good fortune to meet you in Baghdad in 1922 and to have a trip to Babylon with you and your party. I shall never forget your look of sympathy and handshake when you said "goodbye" and left for Iran, for at the time I was all broken up about the affair in



Soujbulagh and could not talk about it!

Since coming to Iran this time and having been more intimately connected with the Board and the Mission as a whole, I have often marvelled at your clear conception of our situation and your loving and personal interest for the individual.

"Your place will be very empty" at "156" but I know that even though our connection with you will be severed officially it will not be severed spiritually and that you will rejoice with us in the advancement of God's Kingdom in Iran, as we will rejoice with you in your service for Him in the years to come.

Faithfully yours,  
A. Emilia Endercow.

Kermanshah, Iran

July 7, 1937.

Dear Mr. Speer,

Heartiest congratulations to you on the completion of your term of service as secretary! I cannot quite imagine yet just how it will be on the Mission field without our beloved secretary. We are assured, however, that your spirit will still be with us and the inspiration you have given us will help us during the remaining part of our service.

It is with great pleasure I look back to your visit in 1922 when I saw you first in Baghdad and then later in Tabriz. I had anticipated another visit from you before your retirement when it might be possible for you to visit Urumia once again. We



will not yet give up hope that you and Mrs. Speer may still visit us. The travel will not be so strenuous as in 1922. And perhaps when freed from the burdens of an official nature you may be able to enjoy it all the more.

It is now almost two years since I came here and I always say that Kermanshah is a second Utrunia. Just now I am enjoying a stop-over from Miss McKinney on her way from America to Labriz. A number of her Labriz and Utrunia friends were in for tea this afternoon and we all had a pleasant time together renewing friendships. May the richest blessings be yours through out the days to come.

Sincerely,  
Edith W. Lawrence

Dear Robert, - To those of us who have had nearly a third of a century of service, after having been sent on our way to the field with your blessing, it is hard to think of returning to 156 without seeing you in your accustomed place to welcome and advise us. The shortening of my own time of service, for I see and feel the approach of my own retirement, for my furlough comes next February and after returning to my post there will be only five years until I must retire, makes it possible for me to realize the possibility of your active service stopping.

I hope I shall be able to serve that long, but a schedule that often includes fourteen operations in a day, is too heavy, even for a younger man. The patients have reached 76 recently, 62% men for whom I'm wholly responsible and a number of the women and



Children being major surgical cases, though not on my service, have demanded considerable attention from me personally. During this year of Dr. Russdicker's absence we've had larger receipts, with more bed occupancy and in-patient days than ever in Keonoushah.

The burden of maintenance of the newest and largest of our mission hospitals in Persia, with one of the smallest appropriations, is not easy, but I rejoice to be able to carry on, with operations mounting to nearly 25,000.

I cannot help grieving, however, that recently I've written so very few letters to you and consequently, had so few letters from you, which have always meant so much to me. My heart goes out in great gratitude to you for them and I do hope that in the future I may have many more.

Friendship is too precious to permit it to grow cold, but how often it happens that we permit press of duties, sharing the great burdens & sorrows of others to prevent us from doing the thoughtful & kindly things for our friends which make them feel & know that we love them & want to keep close to them. The missionary physician cannot keep giving his life and his love to the needy whom he serves. I've just come home from the hospital where I've seen a young man whose mother is staying at his side. He had gangrene of a thumb which has been amputated & is developing the same trouble in one of his legs and is very low & may pass away tonight. His mother clung to me and asked



"Can he live?" As I said, "There is great danger" I could not help wishing that I might take his place and restore him to his mother. We ought to be able to rejoice greatly that as we give our lives others will live. The confidence of Christ is wonderful. To put his life down for others has meant everything to us, as he knew it would.

Would that we might welcome you to Persia again & that I might be here to welcome you when you do come. We go home in Feb. 1938 & will probably return in the spring of 1939 so don't come until after our return. What a blessing your coming to Persia would be & you could greatly strengthen the church.

The Syrian people would  
rejoice in your coming. They  
are scattered and in many places  
are without a shepherd. Some  
men outside of Urumia cannot visit  
their families who are living there.  
Those of us who know & love them  
can enter into the fellowship of  
their sufferings. Many of them  
are terribly broken & needy and  
it comforts them to be able to  
tell their troubles to those of us who  
know & who have shared their  
sufferings. If you could meet them  
it would comfort them, but God  
alone can smooth their path & make  
His own will work out a blessing  
for them in all their adversities.



God bless you & keep you and  
make you a still greater blessing  
throughout the years ahead.  
Your inspiration will continue  
with us always and we pray  
that a double portion of the  
blessings of Our Father may fall  
on your successor.

I can with difficult stop  
this message though I've not succeeded  
in saying anything like what I  
hoped to say. One cannot tell the  
deepest things of the heart. May the  
love of this heart find a response  
in your heart. God grant that I may  
see you in America next year.  
God bless you and yours most richly.

Ever affectionately, Harry.  
(W.H. Packard)

American Hospital  
Kernanshah  
1937

Dear Dr. Speer, —

I count it an honor, as well as a great pleasure, to have the privilege of writing this letter. I feel like one of the newer members of your group, and yet, when I remember that I have known you since the June Conference of 21 years ago, it doesn't seem such a short time after all. The fine experiences of that first Conference have been lasting memories, particularly the delightful afternoon we spent with you and Mrs. Speer and your splendid children in Engelwood.

But the outstanding memory I have of you is of your visit to Tisbury in 1922. The "peshwaz" to meet you all, the jolly picnic dinner by the side of the stream, and the fine inspiration of the days that followed, ~~has~~ meant such a lot <sup>to</sup> us all. What a lot of you has been woven into the lives of your many missionaries who have known you through these years! Would that some of us were more worthy representatives!

We will miss having your letters from time to time, we will regret not finding you in your accustomed place at 156,



when we come home next year, but we will hope to see you anyway, somewhere.

We have heard of that charming study or library you have arranged in your new home, and I am glad for you, remembering your remark, the last time we saw you, about your longing for opportunity to "browse among the many books and papers" you have been accumulating about you. I trust there will be many years of this special privilege for you after the very full years of active life you have lived.

We are full of furlough plans these days. We hope to leave here next February, when the weather will permit of sight-seeing in Palestine and Egypt en route, and thus arrive in New York in the springtime. Then we plan to get a car, if it is at all possible, in order that we may get about more easily to see our very scattered family. The four Packard boys are separated about as far as is possible, living in Connecticut, Colorado, Oregon and California! My own family is scattered about Missouri and Michigan mostly, tho' my sister lives in Washington D.C. So it will take a good deal of traveling to



get them all into our itinerary, and we can see a good many friends into the bargain. Who knows but that we may be able to drop in one day and have a chat with you?

Two special events bid fair to mark our year of furlough. One is Dwight's graduation from College in June, and the other is the celebration of my parents' Golden Wedding Anniversary in November. These, with the introduction of the wonderful things of American life to Lizzie and Margaret, and giving them a taste of real school life, will fill our vacation with interest and pleasure. It is indeed a splendid thing to have life divided into day and night, summer and winter, joy and sorrow, years of work interspersed by happy furlough times! And, I might add, after forty years of splendid service, a provision for retirement and freedom from such strenuous activities as have filled your life -

May the coming years be filled with joy and satisfaction that comes from the rich storehouse of a well-trained mind, with continued productions out of your life and thought and with the warm love of your many friends,



scattered over the length and breadth  
of the world.

With all good wishes, I remain  
your sincere and affectionate  
Friend, John Wells  
Packard.

Keruaushah.

My dear Mr. Spier,

During my furlough in America last year, almost everywhere I went mention was made of your approaching retirement, and not infrequently I thought of the sons of the prophets telling Elisha of the approaching departure of Elijah. But even so it has been difficult to appreciate the fact that the time of your retirement as Board Secretary was so near at hand. Especially was this true when I realized how you are still holding the interest, admiration and respect of the present college generation when so many others seem to have lost contact with them.

It is going to be difficult to visualize "156" without you there, and it is going to seem strange to have the Board letters come to us without your signature on them, even though the visit of Dr. Dodds has been a



preparation for this.

The Iran Mission has been especially favored in honoring you as its secretary. There has always been a special inspiration in your letters as well as in your books, which have helped in finding solutions of mission problems, and in the maintenance of a deeper spiritual life. We do not forget "Crown Ointment" as a tonic on cloudy days.

There has been a real assurance that personal as well as mission problems receive sympathetic consideration in the light not only of conditions in Iran, but in their relation to the entire missionary enterprise.

We are sure that your interest in Iran does not end with your retirement, and we know that the inspiration you have been to us will continue far into the future.

May the Lord be with you and keep you and grant to you many more years of inspiration in the cause which has been so dear to your heart.

Cardially yours,

Geo. F. Zerkle

The American Hospital,  
Kennebunk.

My dear Dr. Spear. -

It hardly seems possible  
that the time has arrived for you to  
give up your work as secretary. You have  
been so long associated with the Board  
that we cannot think of it or imagine  
it without you. In the language of the  
"Iracious" your place will be very empty.

My first memories of you are associated  
with college days when your occasional visits  
to Mt. Holyoke as well as your presence at  
Silver Bay and later on at the Student  
Volunteer Convention in Nashville were high  
spots of inspiration for not only myself



but also for the student body as a whole. The later years have only served to deepen the impression of your rare personality and we count it a great privilege to have belonged to a mission which was under your special care. Last year when we were in America my nephew was a delegate from his college to the Indianapolis Student Volunteer Convention. I was much interested to discover that the address of all others which had impressed him most was yours. It is rare that the influence of one personality can meet the needs of so many student generations.

We hope that you may be spared for many years of quiet happiness. We know that the Board will ever turn to you for help and advice and we shall

hope that even in this far land we may  
not lose touch with you. We have always  
felt that you had an especially tender  
spot in your heart for Iran and per-  
haps some day you and Mrs. Spurr  
may be able to make us a leisurely  
friendly visit unburdened by secreta-  
rial responsibilities or the necessity of  
making your way to Tabriz or Meshed  
through winter snow drifts. We should  
all be glad to see you.

Sincerely yours.

Mary Allen Zaehner



مشهد



Meşhed



R. M. S. Queen Mary  
August 2, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer,

Before we left Minneapolis it began to rain, but some things interferred with its completion. I feel more quiet and some how, than I did then, in all the confusion of final arrangements. Our brief voyage has been pleasant and successful. This is a glorious, sunny day, on our first glimpse of England.

Some two weeks before our departure, I came home from teaching at a Young Peoples Conference at Horvick, where I am sure I gained more than I could possibly have given. It was a privilege to watch the eager response and to feel the enthusiasm of the young folk. It all took me back to my own college days, when I was considering the possibility of work in the foreign field. Your appeal to college people influenced me more than anything else. That was my first introduction to you, through your written word.

When, finally, the way to a foreign field seemed open to me, I read through the Y. W. C. A., and a number of us were in New York for Conference, we had the privilege of an afternoon in your home at Englewood, and can never forget the sweet graciousness of Mrs. Speer as we talked by the fire and she read poetry to us; some from Alfred Hayes, I remember.

After I met you, and we came to New York to call on Peria in 1920, it was hard at first to me to feel as if I really belonged to the Wesleyan Board, but you made us feel that you cared about us, personally, and were deeply interested in all that lay before us. That has been our assurance through the years, that you were ready, always, with sympathy and understanding.

In 1921 came the visit to Peria that none of us, in any way, can ever forget. At the first meeting you said, "we have no need to feel hurried, for there is ample time for all that God wants us to do." The same, in times of hurry and confusion, this thought has been of help to me. With Dr. Richard, you came to lunch in the tiny suite of rooms where we became housekeeping. We had acquired but one upholstered chair, which you refused with the remark, "you will not sit in the throne!"

Through the years of depression, through trying times of dissension within the church, we thought of you as a tower of strength, "one who never turned his back but marched breast forward, never doubting clouds would break."

The shadow of Death in your own home made us see the more clearly the shining of your faith, made us sense the more deeply your message of the Resurrection.

Joe and I were pleased to discover a recognition of your service to the Church in one of the beautiful windows in the Mellon Church in Pittsburgh. It was with a feeling almost of personal pride that we saw it, and yet we know that the Memorial, built from the years of loving effort and sympathetic care for our Peria Mission, among others, must stand for more than any such symbol, no matter how beautiful.

Very thankful we were to find you in your office on our last day in New York, for we felt we could not go without a word from you. The heavier burdens of your association with us all, you may be giving over to others, but in our thought and prayer, we shall still be turning to you as counselor and friend. May the years to come be full of rich blessing to you and Mrs. Speer, and, as always they have been, full of blessing for everyone whose life you touch.

Sincerely yours,  
Bernice Peggy Lockman.



Dear Dr. Spurr,

During the years of my life in Iran it has always been a source of comfort and inspiration to have had someone at the Home Base who was as familiar with our work and me personally, and as deeply sympathetic as you have always been.

When I was a child the "Boards" meant to me a row of solemn bearded men sitting on the sands of the Atlantic seacoast in front of an immense upright board. Later, the Board meant you, because of the many letters I used to see addressed to you on my father's desk.

In recent years your letters have always been gratefully received, not only for the business matter contained therein, but more for the helpful and interesting comments you seldom failed to add: about some current event, some book you had read, some appropriate quotation.

I shall miss these letters but am grateful for those received, and for the understanding friendship of all these years.

Sincerely

Joseph E. Spurr

Approaching  
Marseilles, France  
August 12<sup>th</sup> 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer:

On this my fourth journey to Persia, we are making several stops at places of interest and, strange to say, most of them are places I have wanted to see for a long time, but have never before had the opportunity. On previous trips certain places have been visited which continue to stand out in my memory like peaks in a range of mountains. In the same way there are events which have happened in the course of my life that are like those peaks, they tower above every thing else. One of those events is made up of six days in February, 1922, when we were fortunate to have you as our guest in our rambling little Persian home in Meshed. We shall always cherish the memory of that visit and hope you may visit us again some day.

You will never be able to fully appreciate what you have meant to scores of missionaries. May God bless you more richly than ever before.  
Most sincerely  
Geo. Allen Donaldson



Off Gibraltar, Aug. 12, 1937.

Dear Dr. Spear:

"Thanks God for the opportunity of doing your work in the mighty dark!"  
You said these words at the close of an address at a student conference at Lakeside, Ohio, in 1905, when I first came to know you.

The idea of the call to missionary work being essentially a matter between the individual and his God has developed in the years that have followed, and your own strong and cheerful example has been a bulwark of faith for me and many others of the young men you have helped in their major decisions of life. This morning, as I looked again at the old Gibraltar rock, there came this thought of your sturdy leadership and God-given strength of purpose, superior to fluctuations of popularity and persistent in spite of reverses and misrepresentations.

You will have less place now in routine correspondence, but you will continue to be thought of frequently in happy personal recollections, and most particularly in those efforts we must still make to be steady and hopeful when things look discouraging.

With sincere admiration and friendship, I am

Yours faithfully,

- Dwight M. Doreldson.

(Mushed, Iran).

Meshed, Iran (Persia)

June 26, 1937

Dear Mr. Spurr-

For over thirty years you have had my deepest respect, which has ripened into an affectionate regard. I really owe a great deal to you, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge this debt.

With Mr. Holt and other giants of the old Student Volunteer movement, you had a large share in leading me to decide in 1905 "It is my purpose, if God permit, to be a foreign missionary;" the decision which has shaped all the succeeding years of my life, and to which all others have had to take second place.

And after the succeeding ten years of preparation for this work, it was largely your influence which led to my appointment under the Presbyterian Board, when my own denomination expressed reluctance about



appointing me. Further, it was due directly to a personal conference with you about my assignment, and your impressive statement of the unique challenge of the "Holy City, Meshed, right on the border of the Hermit Kingdom, Afghanistan," that I was willing to go to Persia - a field of which I knew nothing!

Now, after twenty-two years of joyful labor in this land, I want to just say "thank you," for steering me in this direction! It has been a rare privilege to watch the unbelievably rapid transformation of ancient, liberating, supreme "Persia" into modernized, energetic, aggressive "Iran"; and I am able to appreciate to some extent that real insight and vision into the possibilities and mortal need of this old land which impelled your pioneers to persist in the work here in the face of so great discouragements and so meagre immediate results.

Mrs Hoffman (Helen Easton), and our two daughters, Betty and Harriet, join me

3.

in sending you our united love and  
heartly good wishes. May you have ever  
that abiding joy which only our dear  
Lord can give, in whatever future activi-  
ties you may engage.

Sincerely your friend,

Rolla E. Hoffman



Meshed, Iran  
June 12, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer:

This is a greeting and expression of appreciation to you from the Irwin who have now grown five years from childhood in the Master's service to Iran.

Omar Khayyam, Nishopurie, who found no answer to his soul-hunger in Islam, often turned upon it in a spurt of agnostic ridicule. He is therefore not so much revered by Mohammedans as by foreign peoples. Yet we find in him some beautifully expressed sentiments. He speaks of the Iranian turquoise as reflecting its blue day skies, while the lapis lazuli is the night sky flecked with golden stars.

Which simile reminds us of the dawning light of Christ's love and sunshine now shining more and more unto the perfect day in Iran; and also of the apostle Paul's words suggesting that we become "blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as luminaries (stars or lights) in the world holding forth the word of life."

"And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

If the apostle Paul longed, in souls won for Christ,

'to have whereof to glory in the day of Christ.'  
to know that he did not run in vain, neither  
labor in vain" so we too, who together are  
co-laborers with Him!

As the Apostle Paul stood to the churches of  
those early days, in example, and zeal,  
in writings and fervor for Christ and his  
advancing kingdom - so you have been  
standing for us who labor with you in  
the far corners of the world to-day. We  
cannot adequately express our gratitude  
and appreciation for what Christ has made  
of you to us. We only know that by his grace  
you too shine in the brightness of his firm-  
ment, and as one of his bright stars - because  
you have poured out of your heart and strength  
and life unto this day in turning many  
to God and righteousness.

You will have whereof to glory in the day  
of Christ; you have not run nor labored  
in vain! This is our sincere testimony;  
we who have known you in conference, in  
personal contact, in letters, and in your most  
helpful and inspiring books.

We plead for a double portion of your  
spirit, until, "taking heed to the word of prophecy  
made more sure, like unto a lamp shining in  
a dark place -" we too may faithfully and joy-  
fully serve - "until the day dawn and the  
day-star arise and shine" in many more  
hearts in Iran and in the whole world.

Sincerely,

J. Mark Irwin

Ruth Irwin

MARY

Beth.



رشت



Resht

1937



Mrs. Bentley, Mr. Livingston Bentley  
Robert, Helen, Catherine.



Dear Dr. Spear,

For nearly thirty years you have spoken to me as one having the authority of experience. When you spoke in Chapel at Yale or at a Northfield Conference, I was one of your devoted listeners. I can not remember your messages of twenty-five or thirty years ago, but I do remember you.

At one of the critical points in my life you pointed the way. I had arrived at the definite purpose to be a missionary. I was inclined to seek work among Mohammedans.

at a winter conference at Northfield you placed before me the alternatives of India and Persia. You know almost as well as I the results of the decision to which you led me at that time. I took the step because I respected your judgment.

Though you must relinquish your position as Secretary of our Board, I know you will continue your work for Christ's Kingdom. It may be that your release from office routine will give you greater opportunities to guide others, as you have guided me, along the paths which you have trod toward the City of God.

Gratefully yours, Junipero Bentley.



Dear Dr. Speer,

It was a joy and a privilege to have you in our home when you visited Iran, our home which was the Hawkes' home. Tho I never had the pleasure of getting acquainted with you in the Board rooms, nevertheless I do feel I know you in an intimate way, having lived with "Uncle Jim" so long. He often shared your letters with me as we sat together, evening, at the reading table.

He told me of experiences you had during your first visit to Iran. Mirza Ali, the cook who helped care for you during your illness, and who remained with "Uncle Jim" till his death, is now a Christian. I'm sure his long years of service in the Hawkes' home helped influence him to take

that step.

We loved Uncle Jim as a father and I know you loved him as a brother. Your affection for Uncle Jim and your personal letters to us make us think of you not as an administrator but as a friend.

I'm thankful to think of your years of loving service in and devotion to the Master's work. May you have many more years of service altho it may be in a different way.

Sincerely yours,  
Florence Bentley



Dear Mr. Spear:

My mind goes back over a period of years, I recall the student volunteer convention in Des Moines in 1919 when your stirring message convinced that huge crowd of students of the need of Christ in other lands, and how you silenced the incessant coughing which I know interfered with anyone on the platform trying to get across a message. To me it was power, strength.

I parallel that to a more intimate association, when you and Mr. Carter spent two days in my home in Kerman-shah or rather in the Stead home which I was trying to run in the absence of the Steads. Your wise counsel to us, though three in number, Mr. & Mrs. Wilson and myself. It had the same strengthening effect your message had in Des Moines.

Then the times in the Board rooms,  
perhaps a few minutes each time, yet  
they stand out in my memory.

My earnest hope is that you may  
enjoy many more years of good health  
to continue on in service that stands  
paramount to all who have been  
privileged to know you or hear you  
or read your books.

Sincerely yours,  
Gertrude E. Benz  
Resht, Iran.



Resht. Iran June 20, 1937

Dear Mr. Speer

One feels that in this letter at least he might venture to write "Resht. Persia" just once more for that has been the familiar term in the years of our acquaintance and correspondence. There is a feeling of loss in changing old names and giving up old ways that comes more acutely at a time like this when one is facing the severing of a long established relationship.

Only a few days ago one of our Iranian friends and helpers who has been closely associated with my wife and myself for many years passed through his way to retirement on pension because of ill health. He came to me a man about my own age as assistant in 1909, he and his wife kept house for me when I was alone in 1910. I visited them monthly when they

were running a branch drugstore  
in Lalyon in 1911. They were  
closely associated with us during  
and after the war and were here  
here when you visited us in 1922 -  
Dr Hag of Hachaluriatz. Since  
then he has been doing medical-evan-  
gelistic work in the area around  
Lalyon - one with whom I have been  
closely associated as he went through  
into retirement I wonder what  
future association or might have  
and what if any Armenian friend  
would be as close as he has been

So it is that as I think of you  
going into retirement I wonder if  
any can ever come so close to our  
Armenian mission as you - certainly  
there is none who can share so much  
of my own missionary life. I remember  
you first as a speaker at the University of  
Perma, then a ride together to Tokiston  
after my appointment when I was to  
first meet a supporting church which



still contributes to my support by  
the way later than were the many  
years of special correspondence while  
I was mission secretary and your  
visit to Persia. My wife recalls  
especially your letters to her when  
she passed her Canguay examination  
and at the birth of our children  
and drying your and Mr. Carles  
underclothes over charcoal braziers  
that they might be ready for your  
long trip to Tabriz.

I doubt whether we ever have  
one of severe universal storms since  
I don't recall your experience, nor  
see the primroses and violets in  
spring after such a storm without  
recalling the impression which they  
made upon you by way of contrast.  
We had a heavy winter again this  
year and a late rainy spring so  
that we were debating a fire this morn-  
ing.

It is with the purpose of this letter

however to dwell upon the past  
but to wish you well for the  
future! I remember when I first  
called upon you after two months  
in the Presbyterian Hospital you  
said "Did you suffer much?" "No"

"Could you read all you wanted  
to?" "Yes"

"Oh, wasn't that heavenly!"

I hope now that you will be  
laying down so many burdens and  
responsibilities you will find  
a compensation in the "heavenly"  
opportunity of reading much.

My wife joins me in very best  
regards and all good wishes  
for you and Mrs. Speer.

Most sincerely

Walden Frame



Resht, Iran  
June 9, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer, -

The privilege of having a share in this collection of letters is inestimable. A full expression of my appreciation of a splendid life beautifully and grandly lived is beyond my power. Perhaps the gifts of life and service that many of us have made to God for Iran are the most eloquent evidence of your influence, and of the power of your spiritual leadership and the ideals that you have so constantly held before us.

Reading is one of my necessities and deepest joys, so I am grateful for your books and letters. One quotation has meant much to me, amid the

difficulties of recent years.  
"After all, the restrictions that  
are being put on us are  
restrictions of method. Except  
in rare places there is no  
hindrance to speaking to  
individuals for Christ and  
none on the privilege of  
living the full Christian  
life."

I am sure that you are  
anticipating happy hours  
of leisure for reading and  
writing, and hope that we  
shall continue to enjoy  
the help and inspiration  
of your books.

Most sincerely,  
Marie Gillespie



تبریز



Tabriz



Affectionate Greetings from Tabriz.



Dr. Ellis  
& Staff  
Operate.



Pageant of Nursing.



Thanksgiving  
Day  
in Tabriz.

Dr. & Mrs.  
Dodds  
our guests.



Greetings to Dr. Speer  
from Tabriz Station.



High school boys



Nurses of Government Class

Student  
nurses  
Tabriz  
Hospital  
send  
Greetings  
to  
Dr. Speer.





Miss Georgis L. McKinney



Dear Dr. Spear,

It is a privilege to have this opportunity to combine our thoughts of you with those of our fellow missionaries on this remarkable occasion.

To us in Iran, to think of the Board is almost synonymous with thinking of you - of what you will think of our proposals, and of what solution you can suggest in our problems - of what inspiration you have continually been to us in your private and public life. - All this because we appreciate the way in which the Holy Spirit has undergirded your life and energized your human abilities to accomplish God's purpose in our common missionary enterprise.

We thank God for your life and example as set before us and it is with regret that we see you nearing the completion of your period of in-

tensive active service with the Board.  
However, it is a joy to believe that  
for years to come we may have your  
continued prayers and sympathetic  
council in the work.

Yours, sincerely, in the work  
of .The Master,

Bessie Grace Armstrong  
Klaire L. Armstrong



Tabriz, Iran, June 15, 1934.

Dear Dr. Speer,

For thirtyeight years you have been my Board Secretary and a constant inspiration and help to me.

All thru these years you have made me know that you were also my sympathetic friend.

The visits it has been my privilege to have in your home, the few conferences I have had with you, the delightful ride into New York with Mrs. Speer on her birthday years ago, and the letters in which you have shown a deep personal interest have revealed to me your happy faculty for sharing your inner life with others and have been the bases for my treasuring the addresses and talks I have heard you give and the books you have written.

Please accept these few words of deep appreciation with my sincere affection for yourself and Mrs. Speer,

Yours sincerely,  
Lillie A. Deaber.



Tabriz, Iran, June 15, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer,

In spite of the inherent heart ache of giving up so many of the responsibilities and intimate fellowships at 156, it must be wonderfully stimulating to come to the end of this period in your life and be able to look forward to the next fifteen or twenty years with so much freedom to plan and carry out the multitude of things that have been crying to be done. Even through the strenuous past years you have in such a wonderful way been able to crowd the moments that are so often lost to most of us for constructive thought, with plans for addresses, material for books and solutions for the many problems of friends and the personnel that look to you as their leader, that the coming years will be the richest yet of your abundant life. There will be many demands for the inspiration of your tongue and pen. You will rejoice in this as opportunity thus comes for you to pass on the messages that come as your spirit communes with the Holy Spirit. There is really no difference between spirits like yours and the prophets of old. They responded to the messages that came from God and carried them to the people. They stand out more in contrast to their times and for the uniqueness of their messages. But after all what we have is rather meagre. But from your mind, through pen and tongue, and many a deed, inspiration and help and guidance pour out in great abundance. We are looking forward with great anticipation to the inspiration that will come to us in the years ahead.

Perhaps the thing that would interest you most in these letters from Iran is something about the writer of each letter. Therefore it is with some hesitation that I dare to follow the hackneyed method of relating something about today's experiences.

With the exception of the first three years of our missionary experience, when we were plunged into war conditions, famine and Near East Relief work, I have found the past year one of the busiest of my life.

I started the new day at five thirty and by six was at correspondance for the best part of an hour. Breakfast was with Mrs. Armstrong, whose Betty is about well from a severe gastroenteritis. It has been great to have a companion at meals but the sick girl brought us all down to the depths. God answered our prayers and the personal communion with him and the sense of fellowship as we learned how others were also interceding for us all has been a fine experience.

After breakfast, rounds in the men's wards and then my class with the nurses. The emergency appendicitis case of some days ago is about ready to go home. The strangulated hernia of three days duration in an elderly man, a druggist in one of the outlying towns, that I did last night, is quite well for the next morning. The gastroenterostomy case is so happy even though weak yet. He was quite skin and bones. The man with the pleurisy and badly involved



lung is never happy, always thinking about his eight dependents. Stories of unhappiness, suffering and dire need contrast with great pleasure and thankfulness over being restored to health and usefulness again.

After class, rounds upstairs among the women. There are several very sick folk, among them two of the student nurses. We are pretty well filled up and need all the nurses we have. The three lads in the children's room require a lot of care. From one I removed a very large bladder stone. Another has <sup>recently</sup> just come in, church time, with a broken femur while playing with the son of one of the orderlies. The other is failing with a heavy infection by psoas abscess which was lanced in the groin by some well meaning practitioner. Another large abscess over the sacrum and general edema. The huge ventral hernia case and the fibroid woman are not very happy yet since last operating day. Their companion, who was referred from the City Hospital maternity department, is getting along well in spite of the hard work that I had. I had another emergency case the same night that ~~that~~ was even more urgent. This was a hydatidiform mole with great exsanguination. She died. My first such case, also in this year, lived.

With a rather heavy operating schedule I hurried dispensary and fortunately found that instead of the usual one thirty or later completion of the patients I had time for an unhurried dinner and a rest before two o'clock operations. Finished about sixthirty and wrote up the ops and began rounds again. Mrs. Armstrong appeared and I realised that it was time for supper. We found Miss Johnson and Miss Pease in the garden with Miss Wooding and seeing that we were heading for food <sup>they</sup> demanded some. However when I accepted their challenge they admitted that they had eaten and would compromise on candy and coffee. I surprised them by producing some chocolate bars, left by some guests. The coffee was very refreshing as well as the conversation about the table. Then good night rounds were made and the recent operatives made more or less comfortable.

And so I close the day with this note to you, which carries with it the desire for you to know how much we have appreciated your personal friendship and ~~the~~ interest and all that the Board has done for us in the various emergencies of our missionary life. My great regret is that Mrs. Ellis is not here to write this letter in her own inimitable way. I am sure that she joins me in spirit.

"With warm regard",

Very cordially yours,

*M. Ellis*

807 College Avenue  
Wooster, Ohio  
30 July 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer:

It seems to be painfully true that you are about to sever your official relationship with us as our Secretary, and while we most sincerely regret that you are leaving us, we wish you to know that we are most thankful that during all these years you have been our Secretary. As a Mission and as individuals we count ourselves most happy and fortunate to have been under your inspiring leadership.

If we had been permitted to choose our own secretary, we would have chosen none other than you. Yet 'we have not chosen you, but you, as it were, have chosen us!' If we have loved you, it is because you 'have first loved' us with a love like that of Christ, himself.

This affection of yours for us knows neither diminution nor decay in the presence of much that is unworthy and unlovely in us, but it has become richer and more tender, more all-inclusive and more understanding until you ever increasingly <sup>have become</sup> more endeared to us to a degree that



seldom falls to the lot of any man.

Personally we are grateful to you for so much more than we have ever attempted to express, nor can we say just what we want to now! But we do desire you to know that we have loved you, always, and do now love you more than ever before. Why shouldn't we? In the first place, you practically changed my life! Years ago at a Student Conference at Lake Geneva, Wis., you touched and inspired me, giving me such a glimpse of Christ as I had never before experienced. Eventually this led me to Beirut and then to the Mission in Iran. How you inspired and thrilled us all at the Missionary Conference in 1913! What joy you gave us by receiving us in your own beautiful home where we met Mrs. Speer! How sympathetically you entered into personal problems, the choice of a field, etc.! How you with other members of our Board enfolded us with your love and prayers when we sailed on the "S.S. Lusitania" on Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> of that same year!

From that time until now, you have ever led, inspired and girt us about with your foresight, courage, faith and love. Indeed the consciousness of your presence has never once left us.

If there has been any faltering, it has been

not in you, but rather in us, who, at times in living too close to our tasks, never would have "looked unto the hills" but for you! You have walked so intimately with our Master that you have never failed to bring us rich treasures out of your thought and experience, nuggets of truth and reminders of God's unfailing promises when we most needed them. Every letter of yours, so it seems, whether written to us on the Executive Committee or as individuals, and no matter how intricate the problems discussed or how vast the plans outlined, - every letter was radiant with faith and breathed a personal concern and affection for each one of us. This - to us - has been one of your most beautiful traits: you have put love of others above everything else.

We, like so many, have lost some of our dearest loved ones, have had serious health concerns, and personal and family problems have weighed heavily upon us. But Mrs. Gifford and I do thank you for your tender, discerning, uplifting letters so revealing your heart of love to us. And we know that to many, many others you have shown the same sincere personal concern and have been so helpful.

With the passing of the years, we have seen



you so competently bearing staggering loads of responsibility and, at the same time so triumphantly trusting God in the midst of the tragic loss of your own gifted, beloved son. How this has touched our hearts, you may not realize! Some day you will see clear as crystal the reasons, perhaps, for such suffering. In God's good world no innocent one shall suffer, but in this world where sin has entered in we have the confidence that God will cause even the wrath of men to redound to His praise. So beautifully, obediently and tenderly have you accepted what has come, and with such a forgiving spirit, that your suffering has endeared you more than ever to us; and you have added power in giving comfort to others. You have been our example and leader even in the shadow of the valley of death.

Both on the field and here at home on Furlough there has always been the quiet confidence that in you we had our beloved leader and friend. And at the last session of the General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio this June we again came under the spell of your consecration and leadership when you made your last official speech to that body. How much we realized what we, as missionaries, were losing! At the same time how we rejoiced to witness the love and esteem that our great

Church has for you and which you so well deserve.

In closing it is only fair to say that I, personally, have not taken so much advantage as I should have of the opportunities to write to you as my secretary and friend. This is a keen personal loss to me. However, I hasten to add that you always have been so persistently faithful and loyal and so extraordinarily sympathetic and understanding. Never once have you failed to lead, inspire and love us.

We believe that you will follow "your" missionaries with the same interest and love that has always characterized you, and we cannot help, even if we would, loving you and following you with our prayers and good wishes, believing that our Heavenly Father has much fruitful service for you to render here to the cause of missions and our beloved Church.

Affectionately yours, on behalf of both  
Mrs. Gifford and myself,  
B. S. Gifford.



Kermanshah Iran.  
July 7, 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer,

Pardon a Tabrizi writing you from Kermanshah, I have come only this far on my journey. I celebrated July 4<sup>th</sup> by reaching here a little before noon, hot, dusty, thirsty. It has been a delightful journey, the most comfortable I have had. Miss Lamm gave me such a fine welcome in her comfortable home. It is delightful to be back again in the Iran family circle. Mr. Loekler has so generously given his time the past three mornings helping me with customs and other business. Tomorrow I can start on toward old Tabriz.

Already I can see tremendous changes in old Iran. I am fascinated watching unveiled women on the streets. So far I have met only one of my old friends who has been unveiled. Not only has she changed so in appearance but her whole personality has gone through a transformation. Her husband once spoke of her as a "frightened little rabbit." That pictured well the frightened, timid woman behind the veil. Now she makes a trim appearance, has developed poise and



self possession, is alert and interested in the world about her. If all of my friends have changed like that I am on my way to a new mission field. How eager I am to get there. How earnestly I pray God may give me of His wisdom and spirit, guiding me in meeting the new situations.

You suggested that when you were free to do so perhaps you and Mr. Speer would come to visit us in Iran. We will be looking forward to that eagerly. No one in all the world could be your welcome. Do not disappoint us. We need the uplift and inspiration which your presence will give. How I hope you will see your way clear to come either in the spring or next fall.

Congratulations seem superfluous when God himself has so richly blessed your long years of earnest service. May the coming years be even more rich with the joy of serving.

Sincerely,

Georgia L. McKinney.



Dear Dr. Speer,

I have been thinking of that lovely April day on which our Tabriz Station went out to Basminch to welcome you. The almond trees were all in bloom, and crowds of people lined the roadsides. You brought so much inspiration and joy to us of the mission, and to so many people of Tabriz. That day remains a symbol to us of all the days of these years which you have so filled with your love and help and inspiration. Our words cannot express how deeply thankful we are for your service of love. I join with all our Iran Christians and missionaries in prayer for God's richest blessing for you and Mrs. Speer and your loved ones.

most sincerely,

Harriet Pease.

Dear Dr. Speer:-

We are glad to join your many other friends in expressing to you at this time, our deep gratitude and appreciation of the happy relationships with you which we have enjoyed since we first went to Persia more than thirty-five years ago. We count it a great privilege to have had your friendship as we realize what it has meant to us and still means to us in increasing measure as the years go by.

It has not been your official relationship to us as Secretary for Persia which has counted most, tho that has meant, to you, many hours of labor in solving problems and adjusting differences, and to us a wise and sympathetic consideration of all our needs and requests, but it has been the personal touch through personal



Letters and individual contacts which  
has meant most to us.

We are glad also to know that your  
interest in Persia and in us, will  
not change because of the severing  
of your official relationship, but  
we are sure that relieved of the burden  
of routine work it will be centered  
even more than before on the personal-  
relationship. We have always felt that  
you have a special love for Persia  
and that Persia has always had a  
large place in your affections.

We hope that it may be possible  
for you to visit Persia again and  
see the changes which have taken place  
since your last visit. We promise  
you that travel will be much  
easier and consume much less  
time than it did on your last  
visit.

Finally, we wish for you and  
Mrs. Speer many years of  
happiness and that your path  
may be "As the sunny light  
that shineth more and more  
unto the perfect day!"

Yours most sincerely,

Lucille D. Pittman

Chas. R. Pittman

Hawthorne  
July 13, 1937.



Dr. Robert E. Spur  
New York City, USA.

Tahriz, Iran  
May 31, 1937.

Our dear Dr. Spur:

Use of the  
Iran Mission Think of you as  
in a peculiar sense "Our" Dr.  
Spur, and you have been so  
held in the deep affection of  
more than one generation of  
missionaries in this land of  
Queen Esther and Daniel and  
the Magi, who went from ancient  
Persia to worship the infant Christ.  
We know that you rejoice with  
us that more people from Iran  
are in these days coming to  
worship Him and bringing gifts -  
not of gold, frankincense and myrrh  
but their hearts.

In some letters,  
if we are not mistaken, you  
have said you would like nothing  
better than to look forward to  
spending your last days in Iran.

# 2.

We should indeed welcome you and urge you to do so, or at least plan if possible to make us a prolonged visit.

We honor you as a great general whose armies have girdled the globe and have never stopped at mountain or desert or other barrier, in the great crusade which you have directed for so many years. A crusade not to take life or conquer lands, but to save life for eternity and win hearts to the Kingdom of Christ.

Soon after this letter is written I expect to leave for a visit to Urumia. I hope I may lend some spiritual help to the pastors and evangelists who carry on there. How I wish you might be with us on this trip.

Most affectionately yours,  
Christy Wilson,  
Fern and the Children.



June 16, 1937

My dear Mr. Speer,

Sunday evening when the student nurses came down for meeting, we went out on the front steps where the new moon was beginning to show between the poplar trees. Mixed in with our own singing we had victrola music and the first piece called for was

"Nobody knows the troubles I have  
Nobody knows but Jesus."

That song has been the favorite of all the nurses in the nine years that I have had the record.

At first, when I knew I was to have a part in this gift for you, it seemed that my letter would mean little to you. I wanted however, to let you know in some way what it has meant to have you for our secretary. Through the past years we have known something of the tremendous burden that you have been under, the criticisms that have come, the efforts you have made that the work might go on. None of us can ever fully understand how you have given yourself for Christ's work. It has been a particular inspiration this

year to think of you for this has been the busiest year I have had.

I have been very happy to take on the work of the government school of nursing for it seemed such a logical outcome of the work of our own schools. We have five students here in Tabriz and the work has all been in our own hospital. Four of the girls are from Moslem families. They have entered whole heartedly into all the activities of our own school. They plan carefully not to be absent from the hospital prayer meetings. They stayed with us the night before Christmas so as to sing carols early in the morning and attend the service planned for the patients.

The program of theory has been very difficult to carry out as planned. It is a joy now however, to see the happiness and eagerness with which they are caring for the patients, doing new things every day, experiencing the joy that comes through service. It is my prayer that they may know the Christ who was among men as a servant. It is my prayer also that I may be used of God to show them the way. So much of the time I do not seem to be big enough for the job. Then it is that I feel like singing



"Nobody knows troubles I have:" I  
When however, I see these new nurses  
learning and progressing, I would say instead:  
"Nobody knows the joys I have  
Nobody knows but Jesus."

I hope that that is being the case with  
you. You have had a large share of troubles  
but I know that you have had a large share  
of joy also, as you have given your inspi-  
ration and vision to us. I remember so  
well your use of the text "And to, I am  
with you always, even unto the end," at  
our communion service for outgoing mis-  
sionaries in 1927. Christ with us means  
strength and power.

I am happy to tell you how much  
your life has meant to me. May I serve  
better because you have gone before.

Sincerely yours,

Frances T. Hooding

تهران



Teheran



Teheran Station, Group not complete,  
Greet's you!



- I Row at the back } +Dr. W.N. Wysham, +Dr. W.M. Miller, +Miss Ruth Muller, +Mr. A. Haverly, +Mr. J.D. Payne, Dr. P.C. McDowell, +Miss (Back Row continued) +Mr. R.L. Steiner, +Mr. A. Perrin Jaquet, +Dr. A.C. Boyce.
- II<sup>nd</sup> Row from back { +Dr. W.A. Groves, +Miss M. Cowden, +Miss J. McComb, +Miss Walker, (II Row continued) +Mrs. Wysham, +Miss E. Payne, +Mrs. Payne.
- III<sup>rd</sup> Row from back { +Mrs. Blair, +Miss Doolittle, +Miss Oman, +Mrs. Groves, (III<sup>rd</sup> Row cont.) +Mrs. Boyce, +Miss Innes.
- IV<sup>th</sup> Row from back { +Dr. T. Gurney, +Mrs. Gurney, +Mrs. Jordan, +Mrs. Rieben, +Catherine Rieben, +Colette Rieben, +Anne Gurney, (IV<sup>th</sup> Row continued) +Miss Pease, +Mrs. McDowell.
- V<sup>th</sup> Row from back { Beginning in centre, between Miss Pease and Mrs. McDowell +J. Wysham, +R. Steiner, +Parris Boyce, +Mrs. Steiner, +W. Steiner.
- VI<sup>th</sup> Row from back { +Wm. Miller Jr., +A. Rieben, +Ed. McDowell, + (VI<sup>th</sup> Row continued) +R. McDowell, +Craig Groves, +Don. Wysham, +Edwin Steiner, +Kate Gurney, +Clifford Gurney, +Warren Groves, +Flora Miller.
- VII<sup>th</sup> Row from back { +Elise Miller, +Frank Gurney, +David McDowell, +Robt. Groves, (VII<sup>th</sup> Row continued) +Margaret Ann Miller, +Mary Caroline Steiner, +Virginia Groves.



Missionaries of Teheran Station, with Student  
Groups.



Christian-Student-Conference  
in a palace of Nasser-ed-din-Shah.

Dr. Groves (near pillar) Dr. Jordan (wearing white hat) Mr. Young (in white suit  
to left of centre 2<sup>nd</sup> row)



Dr. S. M. Jordan, Mrs. W. Groves, Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Boyce, Dr. Boyce.  
with Persian Students, at Jordan home.





Student Christian Conference, Mar. 1937 -  
Dr. Davis, Dr. Conley, Dr. Mrs. Jordan

American Hospital,  
Telheran, Iran

July 22, 1937

Dr. Robert E. Speer,  
156 Fifth Avenue,  
New York City.

Dear Dr. Speer:

As the time of  
your retirement approaches, I  
wish to join with the rest of my  
colleagues in a farewell note of  
appreciation. I learned as a  
High School boy to know and re-  
spect you through your books  
which my parents encouraged  
me to read, as well as through  
hearsay.

I cannot help thinking of  
you now in the light (or  
shadow) of the controversy  
which has stormed about  
your head for over a decade.  
As this unpleasantness  
burns itself out, the differ-



since between yourself and your detractors has become evident. They have found themselves unable to cooperate with or keep the cooperation of men whose views are fundamentally compatible with their own. On the other hand you have been successful in getting loyal cooperation on constructive projects from men whose views are not only like your own, but also from men of quite divergent opinions. ~~from~~ as one of the latter, I am proud to have been for nearly a dozen years a member of your field staff. I can never forget and do not wish to - the gentlemanly way you have dealt with my dissenting viewpoint, and the kindly way you have endeavored to win me to your own.

Respectfully,  
Ed Blair



I remember that one night, in a caravan, I had journeyed the whole night long, and slept at morn on the skirt of a jungle. An enthusiast, who was a fellow-traveller of ours on that journey, uttered a loud cry, and took the road to the forest without taking a moment's rest. When it was day, I said to him, "What predicament was that?" He replied, "I perceived the nightingales breaking forth into cries from the trees, and the partridges in the mountains, and the frogs in the water, and the beasts in the forest; and so I thought it would not become me as a man to be sleeping while all were engaged in extolling the perfection of God."

The Gulistan--Sa'di

With deep gratitude for your help and inspiration,  
With warm appreciation of your understanding sympathy,  
With high esteem for your Christian leadership,  
With sincere Best Wishes for the years of service to come.

Faithfully yours,

Arthur C. Boyer



Dear Dr. Spear,

Looking back over the years, I am sure I have known you longer than you has known me! I entered Willaby in 1898 and my first memory of you is your preaching one Sunday morning in College Street Chapel, just when I do not know. I recall vividly that your yearly Sunday at Willaby was a Red Letter Day for us all.

Then follow memories of you at Northfield Conferences and at Silver Bay, later, correspondence as my plans for Russia grew definite, and then the Conference for New Territories before I sailed in 1906.

In 1922 you came to see us in Iowa and we had the pleasure of putting you up a few days before you went to Warsaw. Do you remember how utterly weary you were when you returned from Warsaw? "Home seems very, very far away to us just now," you said.

All things the years your friendship and sympathy has been a great help to me. Your address, your books, your letters, your faith and devotion to our Lord, has been a constant inspiration to me. The book yours I have read and re-read many times and the most full is "The Teacher's Quiet Heart." Its atmosphere always takes me back to the quiet and the beauty and the power of sunset hours on Round Top. We all acknowledge with pride and gratitude your Christian scholarship and leadership and statesmanship - but I personally thank God most for you as a man who by word and life has made Jesus Christ more real to me.

God bless you!

Yours with affection,  
Annie Stocking Boyce

On board  
S. S. Excambion  
August 10, 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer,

Greetings to you from mid-ocean as I am now returning to Gran. Here at sea my thoughts reach out to Gran and to the home land, to hopes for the future and to earlier terms of service and even back into my preparation days. I wish you might know how much your leadership has inspired me all along the way of my missionary experiences.

In my early preparation, even before I entered college, I eagerly read any writings of yours that I could get. I know that many of my thoughts and attitudes today received their direction from those messages from your pen.

In the same way through my fourteen years in Gran, when I have felt perplexed as changes have come in the church at home and on the field, I have looked to your leadership and found encouragement in the steadfastness of your faith which sees beyond present difficulties into the triumphant reign of Christ.

As I go back now, I know your prayers follow all our work as all of us follow you with our love.

Very sincerely,

Luce S. Chase



Teheran, Iran.  
June 30, 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer: -

When Mrs. Miller handed me the paper on which to write this letter, I was reminded of the first time I met you. It was in Burlington, Iowa, in October, 1911, at the meeting of the Synod of Iowa, which I attended as Synodical Secretary for Young People's Work. The Rev. Willis L. Gelston introduced me after one of the evening meetings, at which you spoke.

I think the next time was in Hamadan in January, 1922. You were not in New York when I sailed for Persia in August, 1915. One of the times I remember was in Iowa City at the baccalaureate service at the State University, after Dr. Lampe had brought you through my home town, on the way from Fairfield.

I hope there may be some opportunity for seeing you on my next furlough, even though you will not be in your own corner in the Board rooms.

Very sincerely yours,  
Margareth. Cowden.



Albany College of Teheran  
Teheran, Iran  
July 7, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer

Our associations with you seem to be inseparably connected with the two letters "r e". In college and seminary days, through the inspiration of your talks and books, you helped to "re-shape" our lives, with the result that we found ourselves looking more and more toward the mission field as the place where we could give the most useful service for our Lord. Those aspirations became a reality with our sailing for Iran (Persia) in 1925, and it was a real joy to know that, as missionaries in Iran, we were to be more closely associated with you than ever before.

The next "re" came when you attempted to demonstrate the "recovering" of a missionary at Lakeville in 1931. Your tears of mirth and the hoots of the audience were ample testimony to the effectiveness of the demonstration.

Certainly new light was shed on Dr. McAfee's problem, "How to recover missionaries."

Now we find that we are to write a word to you on your "retirement" and we can only give proper expression to our regard for you, and the feelings of loss associated with your leaving your work as senior secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, by hoping that you will be speedily "recalled" to the work of the Board in some equally useful capacity.

Your sincere friends,  
Estelle Crawford Groves  
Walter A. Groves



Imamzadeh Ghassem,  
Teheran, Iran.

August 1, 1937.

Dr. Robert C. Spur,  
156 Fifth Avenue,  
New York City.

Dear Dr. Spur,

Your many years of service and leadership require no word from us to make them complete, but we are very happy to have the opportunity, on this special occasion, of expressing our deep appreciation of the inspiration which you, as foremost Christian statesman in America, have been to us, long before we had any official connection with the Presbyterian Church or the Board of Foreign Missions. Even more than your sermons and your books, the long period of devoted

and courageous following in Jesus' way of life, had brought us encouragement and the determination to carry to carry on, although we have had this to view from afar with only a very few more intimate contacts.

Once you preached in Mandel Hall at the University of Chicago, and stopped to greet friends in the Reynolds Club. Mr. Stagg's hearty "Well, Bob"; your warm "Aloha", and the conversation which followed gave us all definite proof of how thoroughly you believed the spirit of Christ should be in the physical life and training and how he endeavored to keep it there. This unity between two great leaders in spiritual and physical training meant much to me then and later.

You have our prayers and best wishes for the years to come,



in what we know will be  
a very active retirement, and  
we are relying on the same  
leadership and inspiration  
with always a forward look  
and a pressing on.

Most sincerely yours,  
Henrietta C. Gurney.

F. Taylor Gurney

Albany College of Pharmacy  
June 26, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer -

Altho for almost forty years you have been our Secretary our regard for you is personal not official. You may not recall, but I do that in my freshman year you visited Sayafette and spoke to the Y.M.C.A. Thereafter hearing you speak on many occasions, reading numerous articles as they appeared in Northfield Echoes, the Missionary Review and elsewhere were experiences that made constructive contributions to the education of the Jordanians - We remember you so well at that first Conference for New Missionaries in 1898, our visit to your home, getting to know Mrs. Speer and



and hearing from her something of her experiences in Persian travel with helpful suggestions, and later the farewell service in the First Church of Easton.

In your report on your visit to Mission fields in 1896 you pointed out that Teheran was the strategic weak point of Islam. This with which we fully agree, has been a constant source of confidence and strength throughout the years.

Association with you on many a campaign, traveling with you, speaking from the same platform, has been a privilege enjoyed and deeply appreciated - To enumerate all our experiences would require

many pages, and it is not necessary.

Someone has reported that you and Mrs. Speer are contemplating another visit to mission fields this coming year. We trust that you will remember your first love, Persia, and come to us once more. Mrs. Jordan and I have always regretted that we were absent in America when you were here in 1922. We hereby invite you to be our guests for as long as we can. Persuade you to remain in Tehran.

We trust that in the years to come our paths will not only cross but often coincide.



Assuming you both of  
our continuing love, confi-  
dence, and admiration,  
we are,

Your friends,

S. M. Jordan

Nancy Park Jordan

Hamadan, Iran

July 14, 1937

Dear Mr. Speer,

Another one of your well-wishers greets you across the miles.

It seems as if I had just seen you and heard you speak for we members of Teheran station had the pleasure of seeing the Centennial film of the Board's work at our last devotional meeting of the year.

Another pleasure associated with you that I am anticipating is the reading of The Fish Tales of your Maine guide, Owen Crummins. I picked it up at Mrs. Funk's home the other day and she offered it to me to read. It was interesting to point out your picture in the group of campers



to some other tea-guests to see if they could recognize you. In that picture you look just like you did in a little "snap" that Laura has of you taken with little five year old Margaret at Silver Bay years ago.

Mrs. Funk's guests fell to reminiscing. Shouldn't you have enjoyed the sequel to their "Well, the first time I ever saw Mr. Speer was -----" ? I surely did. How your ears must burn these days as your great host of friends encircling the globe are often engaged in loving conversations about you.

I am so glad that I have had the privilege of foreign mission service in one of the lands that has for so many years been dear to your heart. Your continued prayers for Iran, I'm sure, will be joined with ours at the Throne of grace.

Heartiest wishes to Mrs. Speer and you as you retire to your lovely Lakeville home.

Cordially yours,  
Judith H. McComb

American Hospital -  
Tehran, Iran.  
July 17, 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer,

I came across these lines the other

day -

"God wove a web of loveliness  
"Of clouds and stars and birds  
"But made not anything at all  
"So beautiful as words.  
"They shine around our simple earth  
"With golden shadowings,  
"And every common thing they touch  
"Is exquisite with wings."

At the time I thought them very much to the point - But now that I come to write this letter to you, I am not so sure, - for how can I put into mere words all you have meant to us? Some of my earliest memories are connected with your name - for many years "Dr. Speer", synonym for "The Board", was the distinguishing feature for me of a city called New York. Later on when I learned that New York was one of the largest and most important cities in the world, I wasn't a bit surprised - didn't Dr. Speer (the Board) live there?

A good many years have passed since then, and I know more about New York - and the Board - than I then did. Also since then Dr. Speer has become a very real person to me, instead of a far off power. It is a heartening experience to grow from childhood to - yes - middle age, and to find one's hero not only not diminishing with the



passing of years, but on the contrary, growing as one's own power of appreciation enlarges. Always you have stood for a love, and wisdom, and goodness which have been an inspiration.

Now that the time has come when you are to be technically separated in our thoughts from the Board, - for the separation will never be one of heart or spirit - we want to tell you in words, inadequate as they are, what you have meant to us. Perhaps we should have told you before what you place in our hearts has been and is, - but "men do not celebrate in rhyme their daily bread". It has taken this special occasion to call forth an expression of our love.

I have been saying "we", "us", and "our", because Philip, who (as you know), is less prolific as a writer even than as a speaker, joins with me in this greeting.

Affectionately,

Sarah Wright M<sup>rs</sup> Dowell

Philip C. McDowell

Teteran, July 15, 1937

My dear Dr. Spear,

It was just 25 years ago that I first saw you. I had come up from Washington and Lee with my mother and brother to the student conference at Northfield, and going into the lovely Chapel soon after my arrival I found you and Dr. Mott standing near the pulpit talking together. What an impression that conference made on me! In your address on Sunday morning in the Auditorium on "The Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ" I saw that glory in your face more clearly than I had ever seen it before, and since then I have never read that verse without thinking of you.

I can never thank God sufficiently for what you have meant to me during this quarter of a century since Northfield. You have been a constant source of inspiration and blessing to me. It was largely as a result of a conversation with you while we were hanging on to the straps in a crowded street car in Kansas City.



during the Student Volunteer Convention of 1914 that I decided to become a foreign missionary. It was to you that I confided my longing to go to Meshed as we were walking across the Princeton Campus one Sunday afternoon five years later, and it was your encouragement and help that brought me to Persia. Your visit to Meshed in 1922 was like the coming of an angel from heaven to one who had for weary months been working alone in Sistan. And in my visits to America nothing has inspired or uplifted me more than your addresses. I cannot think of your address at the Lakeville Conference, or of the series of sermons you preached on those hot Sunday afternoons in the Fifth Avenue Church in New York in 1932, or of your last address that same summer at the Massanutta Conference in Virginia, when with tears streaming down your face you plead with us to take up the Cross and follow Christ, without being deeply moved.

And how can I thank you, and thank God.

for your books, and your prayers, and your letters to me through all the years? Through you, more than through any other man whom I have ever met, Jesus Christ has revealed to me His glory. And my life as a missionary has been largely moulded and inspired by your ideals and your passion, so that you can rightly feel that the fruit which I have borne is really the fruit of your own life (I will not suggest that my mistakes and failures have any relation whatever to you!). If those who have believed through me are my children, they are your grand-children, and I am sure you would rejoice to know some of them better. Let me tell you of two of them.

Several years ago during a series of meetings which were held in the Teleran Church a well-known Persian artist became interested in the Gospel. He remained each night for the aftermeeting, and seemed strongly drawn to Christ, but it was some time before he finally yielded his life to his Saviour. When he did profess his faith we learned that he had been addicted to drink and opium.



and had often tried without success to free himself. After becoming a Christian he again attempted to leave off these enslaving habits, and succeeded. But evil is very strong, and more than once he fell back into sin. No one who has knelt with him in his little home and heard him pour out his heart to God in prayer can doubt the reality of his faith or the sincerity of his repentance, and in his struggles and his many difficulties and anxieties it is Christ who has given him comfort and hope. When he was asked to help in preparing the volume for you he accepted the task with great joy, and he has painted these beautiful covers and the special pages for the different stations not for the small sum of money he received but as an expression of his gratitude and love. The name of this grand-son of yours is Hosein Behzād, one of the best Persian miniature painters now living. How he would appreciate a letter from you some time! His wife has become a Christian too, and his son is a student in Albany College.

You will remember Nishapur and Sabzevar on the Meshed road! What memories of weariness and cold, of snow and rain, and the shepherdless sheep, those names bring to your mind! About nine years ago I was passing through the bazaar of Sabzevar for the last time before leaving the city at the command of the Governor, my bag of Christian books being hung over my shoulder. A young man sitting idly before a shop stopped me, and for lack of something else to do bought a copy of the Acts of the Apostles from me. A few days later this same young man came to Nishapur where I was working, and then after a few days decided to become a Christian, and before my departure from Nishapur he was baptized. Shortly afterwards he chose as his family name "Omidvar", meaning "Hopeful", a name he had found in Pilgrim's Progress, and from that time he has been more and more a source of comfort and hope to his Christian friends. During four years in the army he gave a fearless witness to Christ, though he suffered considerable persecution for his faith, and now as a Colporteur of the Bible Society.



he is busily engaged in touring Khorasan to sell the Book which saved him. Recently he sold 700 copies of the Scripture in Meshed in a single month. A few weeks ago I had a letter from him from Sabzevar where he first saw the Bible, and he wrote that he had worn blisters on his heels carrying scriptures to the bazaar to supply the demand for God's Word. "Twenty men have expressed a desire here to become Christians," he wrote, and when Mr. Erwin of Meshed went there to meet these inquirers he found more than twenty eager to hear the Good News. Omidvar is now the head of a Christian family, and his five little hopefuls ought some day to make splendid recruits for the Army of the Lord in Khorasan.

Would that you could visit us, and see your children and your children's children once more! What a welcome you would receive, and what joy and blessing your presence would bring us!

In closing I will say one word which includes all that is in our hearts as we think of you on your 70th birthday - We all love you very dearly!

With deep gratitude and affection,  
William McE. Miller





house was breathlessly quiet, listening.

The next time I remember meeting you was again at Northfield. This was at a young people's conference where as a young girl, I met Louise S. Andrews, about whom you wrote the book "One Girl's Influence" which meant much to me in my boarding school days. At this conference there was an ex-sailor who was seeking a deeper religious experience in order better to run a large sea-man's hostel near New York City. I talked and labored with him, and finally felt that if he could just have an interview with you, of course he would have his doubts and difficulties removed. Appealing to mother an interview with you was arranged; whatever the result was I do not know, but my heart and conscience were set at rest after that. I was confident that you would point the way to that wandering sheep as no one else I knew could do so well.

There were other times when I remember meeting you, but the next vivid picture I have of you is when we sailed for Persia, Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1925. We were in the Board's rooms while William was attending to business matters, and my three half grown children Mary, John and Dorothea Nicholson were about to set out on such an adventure as they



had never had before. There was a bitter blizzard raging out-side, but within we felt the warmth and cheer of your love and interest and sympathy, as you took each child by the hand and spoke each name, and showed them interesting things inside your study and from your office window. When we sailed next day we left with a glow in our hearts, in spite of the blocks of ice we saw floating in the Hudson river, which has remained a lasting influence with us thro' subsequent years of service in our life in Persia.

I was always particularly glad to know that you had once visited Meshed, where we spent five and a half years afterwards. William has shown me photos. of you standing beside him wearing your great sheepskin coat, in snowy weather. When you wrote letters to us in Meshed, I felt that you understood so much better than most, even than our nearest and dearest family circle in America, who had never been there, just what our situation and problems were out in that distant city of the east.

Subsequent contacts with you during our furlough and the delightful evening I spent in company with other furloughed and new/out-



going missionaries, with you and Mrs. Speer in your apartment in New York City, are never to be forgotten events. And always the sincerely loving and personal interest your letters revealed toward us have found a deep response and appreciation in our hearts.

No matter who takes your place in the office at 156 when you retire, to us it will be as the Persians say "Your place is very empty." But the place you hold in our affections is very full, - full to overflowing! May we indeed overflow to others as you have always done, with at least a measure of the love and consecration and loyalty that you have for our Master, in His cause!

Your loving friend and cousin,

Isabelle H. N. Miller

(Mrs. Wm. M. E. Miller)

Please give my most loving greetings to Mrs. Speer.

The American Mission,  
Tehran, Iran.

June 17, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer:

In the letters which have been written to you superlatives have been exhausted and the entire field of your varied activities has been fully covered by others.

We wish to bear a simple testimony of gratitude to you for a deed of yours, very small and insignificant in your eyes no doubt, but one which meant much to us at the time and will always remain in our memories an example of the personal interest you have for each one of us.

On the day when Mrs. Cook and her four children and our two children arrived in New York, August 1932, you were present on the dock to greet them. You spoke to our Eleanor and Tommy so kindly and on your return to your office you took time from your busy day to write to us of their welfare. You have probably forgotten the incident but we will never forget the joy your simple, sincere compliments of our children gave us.



We know, also, that we owe our second short furlough which enabled us to meet them again in less than two years and help them in their school problems, to your kindly, personal interest on our behalf.

It is our prayer for you as you now retire from the work which was so needed by your generation, that you may have the spiritual peace and joy which you so richly deserve because of this same loving personal interest in His children of the World.

Most sincerely yours,  
Grace V. Payne.

J. Payne

Albany College of Teheran, June 1937

Dear Dr. Speer:

We are glad to have this opportunity to thank you for your help to us in various occasions and briefly to call back to your memory at least a part of that which you have done on our behalf.

In the fall 1920, after six months of correspondence you secured for us from the British authorities a permit to return to Persia via India and Mesopotamia.

In 1923, the year after we had had the honour and pleasure of seeing you in Tabriz, we owed it to you to become affiliated missionaries and, later, to have the advantage of being received members of the Sustentation Plan of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church.

We fully realize how much of your invaluable time must have been taken on account of the con-



difficult situation in which we have been involved during the last three years, 1933-1936, in which we were in Switzerland and how, in spite of the numerous and heavy tasks that were yours, you succeeded to have us newly engaged in Iran, as regular missionaries of the Board of Foreign Missions.

Finally thanks to your recommendation to D. G. Taylor, in the fall 1936, we have been accepted as members of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilkinsburg Pa.

We highly appreciate all those repeated efforts to help us and express our hope that this period of retirement which is beginning for you now is going to be a long, happy and blessed one.

W. Rieken

Dear Dr. Spear,

Will you permit me to pay a tribute to you because of the help you have been to me through your books. During my earlier years, a friend gave me a copy of "Remember Jesus Christ." The book was filled with inspiration for a college student. The title itself, "Remember Jesus Christ" is the thought that always comes to my mind when I hear your name. In one of the talks of this little volume, you expressed, as a burning desire, that Jesus Christ might be your waking thought each morning. This has long been my prayer for myself. The simplicity of a practical Christian life was illustrated by the servant who was to go to the train to meet his new master, whom he had not seen. He was told that he would be a tall man helping someone and, true enough, he was able to identify his master by this means. Oh, that we might always be helping someone. The means for attaining these two ideals stands out in an illustration in another of your early books, "The Master of the Heart." You are quoting Andrew Bonar "in regard to the helpfulness of trying to pray every hour of every day, though only for half a minute." Through these and other writings my life has been greatly enriched.

My crowning experience has been the deep satisfaction



in having a part in the work of foreign missions here in Iran, your particular interest. To you and your co-workers who have borne the almost unsupportable burden of keeping this great feature of the work of the church alive, we owe our utmost gratitude; we give our deepest loyalty.

Very cordially yours,  
Maud A. Rowlee

Teheran, Iran  
May 25, 1937

My dear Dr. Speer,

It is hard for us to accept as really true the word that you will soon be giving up some of the countless duties you have carried so long. Certainly we shall find it strange to have any one but you as our Iran secretary. Many of our first impressions of Iran were gained through correspondence with you and during the delightful afternoon we had at your home before we sailed in 1920. Soon after our arrival here came your memorable visit to Iran, and we talk even yet of the thrilling adventures which you had in what was still "old Persia". Always since then we have known that you were ably representing us at the home base, being assured that Iran and our work here had a completely trustworthy advocate in you. Always we have been certain of your unflinching interest and sympathy. We have been proud of our leader, and the faith and courage which you have always shown have been an inspiration to us as we have shared with you the task of making Jesus Christ known to the world.

The husband in this family wishes to add a paragraph as to his personal experience, extending back of our entering the Board's ser-



vice together. His first contact with you was at Northfield in 1911 one Sunday morning, when, in white flannels, you dropped into the Bible study group in which he sat under the trees. At that student conference and throughout his college and seminary years, you were an ideal for him in intellectual and spiritual achievement, through your addresses and books, your letters and personal contacts. The years of field service, as well as the two years of closer fellowship at 156, have not dimmed the hero-worship of a quarter century ago.

We thank God for you, and pray that He may grant you many more years of undiminished strength for the work which none can do so well as you.

Sincerely yours,

Minna G. Boysham  
William N. Boysham

Dear Dr. Speer,

The missionaries who went out to a foreign country under leadership such as yours hope that as you give up this work, you may realize how deeply we regret that it must be so. Your vision and faith, to say nothing of your whole life itself that was given to the work, were an inspiration. May the years ahead hold for you many days of joy and peace of heart. We know that still much of your energy and prayer will be for this work of which you are and always will be a part. In this we rejoice, as we wish you and Mrs. Speer many happy years ahead.

Most sincerely,  
Charles E. Young



Dear Dr. Spear:-

It is trite to say that to many of us on the field as well as in the homeland you have indeed been the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. This is true, nonetheless,

Therefore it is only with the expectation that you will continue your same prayerful interest even after your actual retirement that we can face such a possibility.

May I tell you how I shall always value among my most precious memories the opportunities I have had this past year to get to know you a bit more directly than in my relationship on the field.

We hope that these next years in which you will not be bothered with routine may be very happy and fruitful.

Sincerely,  
Herich Young

Holland Patent, N. Y.,  
September 6, 1937.

Dear Dr. Speer,

It has been my pleasure and privilege to bring from Grace to America the box of letters from the Grace Mission, which you will be receiving with this note. I thought perhaps a few words of explanation should accompany the book and hence this added letter.

We had hoped to have a letter from every member of the Mission, but a few are still missing. Except for the letter from the Italian Church written by Rabi Stephan Khoolyar and



the letters from our honorably retired missionaries, the others are arranged in alphabetical order by Stations and the Stations are also in alphabetical order, as you will notice.

The covers and the illuminated pages before the letters of each station are the work of Agha Bihzad, a convert from Islam, who, in the opinion of many, is the foremost artist of the traditional miniature style of Iranian painting now living. He says the background of the covers is the color of the Iranian sky in the morning after sunrise before the sun is very high. The pictures on the illuminated pages will perhaps be perfectly clear in their significance to you, but since I was perplexed as to the connotation of one of them, it may not be amiss for me to say that Hamadan's page

is intended to represent Art. Alvand, Ker-  
maushah's figures from the Taj-i-Burtau  
outside the city, Meshed's a gateway in  
the shrine of Imam Reza, Resht's a bit of  
the Caspian, Tabriz's an altar of the Zoro-  
astrian faith (because Tabriz was an ancient  
center of that worship according to the artist),  
and Shiraz's Art. Demavend.

The writing in Persian at the top of  
these pages is the name of the Station,  
as it is in English at the bottom. This  
writing is the work of Ayha Khoshnevis,  
an Iranian teacher of penmanship who  
has been associated with Albany College  
for over 30 years and with Nur-  
bakhsh School for a number of years.

The committee in charge of preparing  
the book was Mrs. Miller, Mrs.  
Groves and Mrs. Wilson, and they  
are the ones, Mrs. Miller in par-  
ticular, to receive your special ap-



preciation.

We of course do not expect you to reply to each letter. A note to the committee will be sufficient.

and please be sure that a great deal of affection and love accompanies this bit of remembrance from our Mission.

Very sincerely yours,  
Cady W. Allen.



Lakeville, Connecticut,  
September 28, 1937

To the India Missionaries:

Dear, dear friends:

How could you ever do such an amazingly generous thing as you have done in this beautiful gift of the Kashmir silver tea service which Dr. Dodds presented in your name at the Board dinner on Monday evening September 20th? It makes me humble to think of all your loving thoughtfulness and of the gifts from so many dear friends on the field and at home on furlough and among the list of the Honorably Retired, which I have now joined. I do thank you with all my heart - those who conceived the idea of doing this and every one of you who have had part in it. Mrs. Speer and I are more grateful than words can tell. We have made almost daily use of it since, and the service and the tray are the admiration of all who see them.

It did not require any such wonderful token as this to testify to your kindness and friendship. For more than forty years it has been a joy to be associated with you and the India Missions and the Indian Church. The first missionaries of our Church whom I remember meeting as a boy were Mrs. Goheen, the mother of Rob and John who came from my home county in Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Orbison, the mother of Hal, as I always knew him, who was kindred to my mother and who lived in a neighboring town. And as I look back I count among life's dearest and truest friends members of the Missions in India.

It was to John Forman that I owe my decision to turn from the study of law to missionary service and I thank God for all that I learned from his saintly direction.

But I cannot speak one by one of all of whom I would like to speak. All of you have been true and considerate friends and it has been a privilege and joy to try to serve you here at home.

Mrs. Speer and I have moved away from New York and are making our permanent home here in the little country farm house which those of you saw who were at the Lakeville Conference in 1931. I wish we could hope to see you all here some time in the future and give you tea out of your own lovely gift.

Very cordial invitations have come from you that Mrs. Speer and I should visit India and even settle down there as honorary missionaries. Perhaps we may be able sometime to come. The Board has generously asked me to undertake the duties of the third Joseph Cook Lecturer and if I find it possible to do this we may come in the not too distant future. This is all still undecided, however. Something may depend on the future situation in China and whether our daughter, now on furlough, is able to resume her work in our North China Mission in Peiping.

In any case you are all and will ever be in our thought and prayers and we shall be asking for God's richest blessing upon you and on all the work of the Mission and the Church in India.

Very affectionately yours,

(Signed) Robert E. Speer.



Lakeville, Connecticut  
September 28, 1937

To the Iran Missionaries

Dear, dear friends:

How can I ever show you how grateful I am for the most beautiful book brought home by Mr. Allen and presented so felicitously by Dr. Young at the Meard dinner on the evening of September 21st. I appreciate deeply the loving care with which the Committee of Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Groves and Mr. Wilson gathered the letters, the glorious skill of the artist, Agha Bihzad, the warm-hearted letters which came with the book from Mr. Allen and all the affectionate letters bound up in it from the Church and the Mission in Iran.

I certainly do not deserve all the things that are said in the letters but I do thank you for saying them. They bring back never to be forgotten experiences and they represent rich and abiding friendships. Some of the scenes in the various stations and on journeys between the stations and most of all in your hospitable homes comes back to memory. The faces of dear friends who are gone rise before one. All the wonders of God's blessing in the growth of the work and the mystery of the tragedies of the years are before one's mind. I could write a full book to you in return for yours. All that I can say, however, is that your affection so lovingly expressed is abundantly returned and that I have every one of you in my heart and shall have you there, in love and prayer, always.

Mrs. Speer and I have moved from New York now and plan to make our permanent home at Lakeville, Connecticut, where those of you who were at the Lakeville Conference saw us. I wish we could hope to see every one of you here.

Some of your letters speak of the possibility of our visiting Iran again. I do not know whether this will be possible. If it should be, it would be a joyous experience to see the work again after the past intervals of forty and fifteen years, and to meet you all and to tell you face to face of my gratitude and appreciation.

Ever your sincere friend,

(Signed) Robert B. Speer







